Abu leader lands on US 'blackest of blacklists'

STORY BELOW, COLUMN 2

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2001 ★ 70 PAGES 7 SECTIONS VOL.17 NO. 11 P15

Fewer poor but life worse, says SWS poll

BY JULIET L. JAVELLANA

FEWER Filipinos now describe themselves as poor, according to a Social Weather Stations survey. That's the good news.

The bad news is a majority of Filipinos continue to say that they are poor and that their quality of life worsened in the last 12 months. They also expect the economy to worsen in the next year.

FEWER/ A19

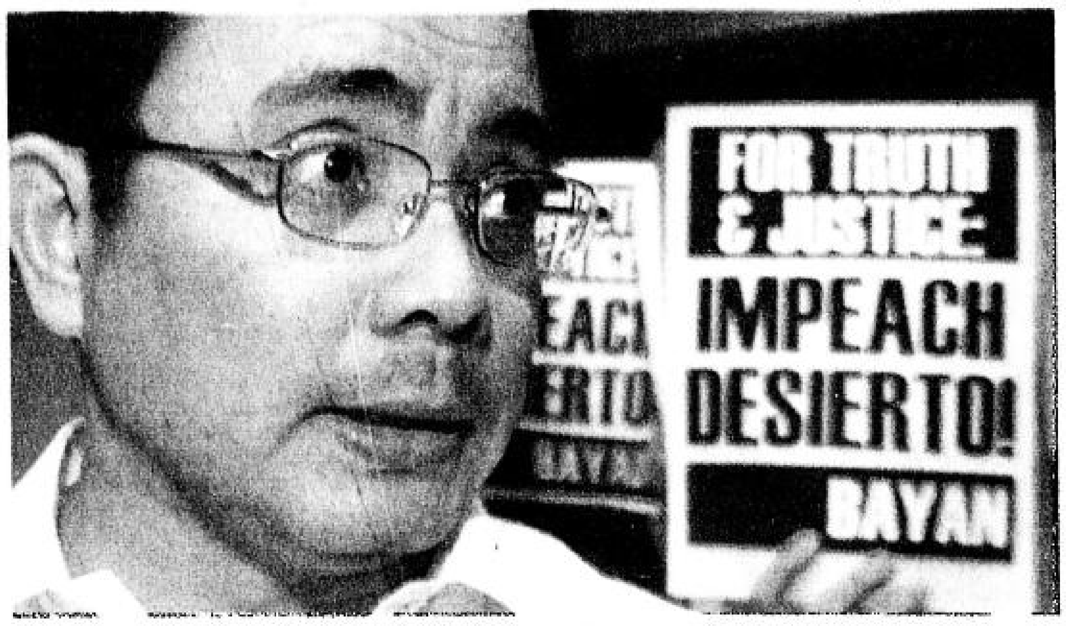
Palace accuser seeks reenactment

BY CARLITO PABLO

THE BUSINESSMAN who claimed to have met in secret with President Macapagal-Arroyo wants to return to Malacañang to retrace to investigators the backdoor path that he said he took. *(See Page A4)*

"If they will allow it, we can have a reenactment," Pacifico "Pic" Marcelo III said in an interview over RMN, the transcript of which was made available to the media by the Palace

PALACE/ A19



DISTURBING body language for complainant Ernesto Francisco.

JOAN BONDOC

With a wink, House body votes 35-5 to junk impeachment rap vs Desierto

BY JULIET JAVELLANA AND CHRISTINE AVENDAÑO

WHY were they winking at each other?

The 58-member House committee on justice yesterday voted 35-5 to declare the impeachment complaint against Ombudsman Aniano Desierto insufficient in substance, but the vote immediately became controversial after several witnesses claimed they saw congressmen winking at the Ombudsman's representative immediately after voting.

One witness, so-called running priest Robert Reyes, said he saw "very disturbing body language" between committee members and Overall Deputy Ombudsman Margarito Gervacio, who sat on the front row of the guests' gallery during the four-hour hearing.

"They were winking at each other (*Nagkikindatan sila*)," said Reyes, one of many civil society supporters of lawyer Ernesto Francisco Jr., who filed the complaint last October.

Party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo of Bayan Muna said the "no" vote appeared to have been orchestrated through some sort of "floor management."

Ocampo said Rep. Rodolfo Albano Jr. (Isabela, Lakas), who was deputized by Speaker Jose de Venecia to act as his representative in the committee, appeared to have given the signal to other members with his "no" vote and his speech questioning the patriotism of those supporting Francisco's complaint.

"It seemed to convey that the position of the Speaker is to vote it down," he said.

Lawyer Leonard de Vera of the E-Justice for All movement also took note of Albano's role in the voting.

HOUSE/ A19

GMA to use coco profits

But where's the money from SMC?

BY CARLITO PABLO

EVEN before the courts could determine the real owners of the multibillion-peso coco levy funds, President Macapagal-Arroyo is going ahead with the use of the funds.

The President wants to use about P700 million in dividends earned by the 27-percent stake in San Miguel Corp. of the coco levy funds as a price support fund for coconut farmers starting January next year.

But there's a hitch. The amount, which the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF) earned for almost 20 years, is nowhere to be found, prompting the President to order for the search for the funds.

Another hitch: The coco levy funds are all tied up in a knot of cases filed with the courts.

Coconut farmers have not been able to use the P9 billion in coco levy collected from them from 1973 to 1982 as the funds are under litigation before the Sandiganbayan. The funds have since grown to an estimated P130 billion.

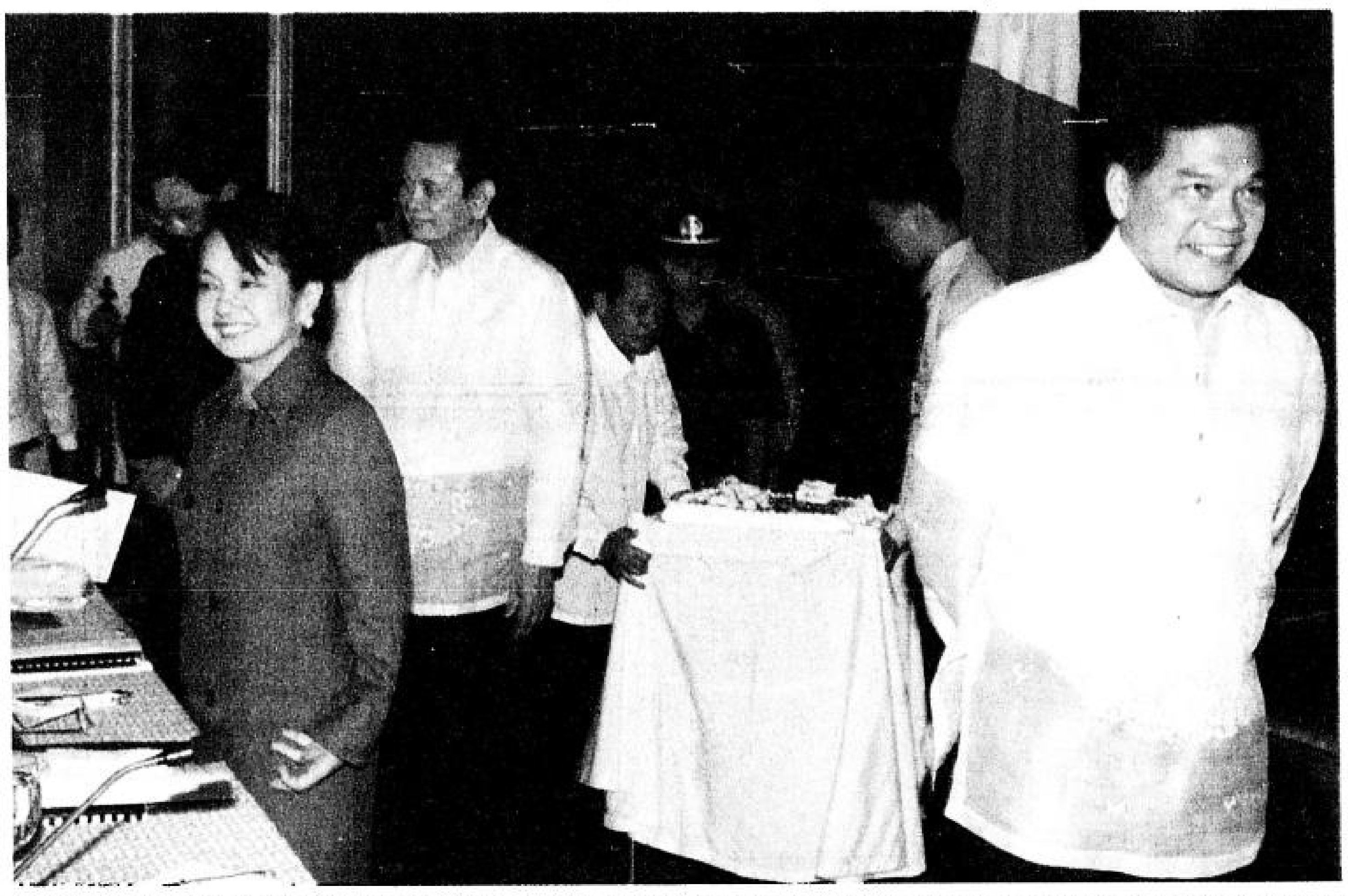
"The President wants the price support fund to be in place by January which would give a big boost to copra and farm coconut prices," presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao yesterday said.

Tiglao said prices of coconut products had been falling and Malacañang wanted farmers to have "some cushion."

"The President's directive is to look for the cash dividends due CIIF," Tiglao said.

The Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) claims that the funds are public in nature because these were collected from farmers using the state's police powers. The Philippine Federation of Coconut Producers (Cocofed) insists that the funds are private as

GMA/ A18



BIRTHDAY break for the Cabinet to greet DILG Secretary Joey Lina a happy 50th. President Macapagal and Vice President Teofisto Guingona lead well-wishers on Tuesday.

EDWIN BACASMAS

'Danding has no business in SMC'

BY CHRISTINE GAYLICAN

IN THE first place, Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. has no business being in San Miguel Corp. and calling all the shots and brokering deals for the giant food and beverage conglomerate.

This is according to former Philippine Coconut Authority Administrator and retired military Gen. Virgilio David.

And there are newly released documents showing that the acquisition of the majority bloc of shares in San Miguel Corp. was financed from coconut levy funds and the United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB).

He claimed that the P1.65 billion used by the SMC chair, Eduardo Cojuangco Jr., to buy 47 percent in SMC were derived separately from the UCPB.

The UCPB was created through Presidential Decree No. 755 to serve as the conduit bank for collected coconut levies from farmers.

And now, Cojuangco, acting like the sole SMC proprietor, is poised to proceed with the $540-million buy-in of the Japanese beer brewer, Kirin.

The deal is "onerous, questionable and one-sided" and it only favors SMC chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr.

"It is questionable because how come the Japanese agreed to the five-year lock-up period of its vot-

DANDING/ A18

Abu chief on US 'blackest list'

WASHINGTON—A Filipino terrorist has made it to the blackest of blacklists—names of top international terrorists that the United States wants dead or alive.

Khaddafy Janjalani, leader of the Abu Sayyaf in southern Philippines, gained international notoriety in 2000 when his group kidnapped 21 foreign tourists and resort workers in Sipadan, Malaysia, and earned millions of dollars in ransom.

Under Janjalani's leadership, the Abu Sayyaf grew from a small Islamic extremist group to a big kidnapping gang. Janjalani's bandits beheaded an American hostage early this year and are still holding two Americans in the jungles of Basilan.

The US government subsequently declared the Abu Sayyaf a terrorist group with links to Osama bin Laden, alleged mastermind of the Sept. 11 attacks on America.

Topping the US blacklist, of course, is Bin Laden, who carries a $25-million price on his head, and his senior lieutenants in the al-Qaida terrorist network.

Their names appear in the FBI's most wanted terrorists, or in other UN or US government lists and documents, but few details are provided.

Some of Bin Laden's senior lieutenants are known only to US intelligence and military officials. Get them, and you hurt al-Qaida, according to the officials.

ABU/ A17

World peace, family time top Santa's list

MEET the toast of the season, Mr. and Ms Santa Claus, who arrive at the Naia on Tuesday night from Finland. Among the kids on his "nice" list is Francis Silva Rosario.

VAL HANDUMON

ARCTIC CIRCLE, Finland—Santa Claus and his elves say they have seen a big change in what young and old people are wishing for this Christmas.

Many people are asking for more time with their families as well as wishing for peace in the world and in Afghanistan.

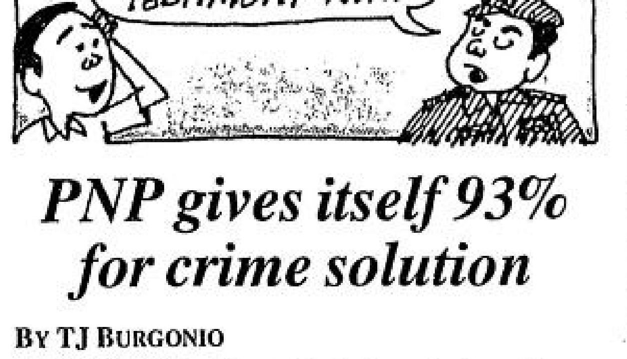
Santa's post office expects to get more than 600,000 letters this year, most of them coming from Japan and Britain.

"Half of the letters from children are about hopes for peace and time with their families. That's much higher than what we've had in the past," says Chief Elf Taima Ollila, sales manager for Santa Claus' main post office.

"This year's letters are also softer, more positive and not so materialistic. That's a very good thing," she adds.

Of course most children's letters also mention toys. Ollila said

WORLD/ A18


HINDI PA NGA NALUTAS. YUNG PAGPATAY KAY NIDA, AH...
SOLVED NA YUN KUNG 'DI BINAWI NI MEDEL ANG TESTIMONY NYA!

PNP gives itself 93% for crime solution

BY TJ BURGONIO

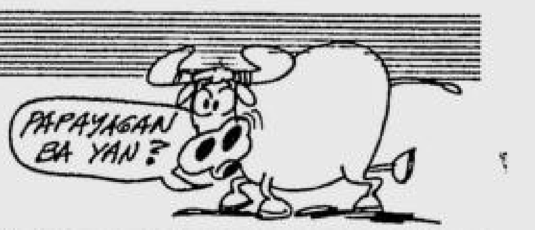
SO WHAT if it had bungled the investigation of the Nida Blanca murder?

The Philippine National Police has given itself a high mark in crime solution, with Director Thompson Lantion of the Directorate for Police Community Relations saying it had cracked 93.56 percent of the crimes committed this year.

"That means 9 out of 10 cases have been solved by the PNP. That's the benchmark of our success for this

PNP/ A18

Second FRONT PAGE


PAPAYAGAN BA YAN?

Sandigan told to rule on Jinggoy bail

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE SUPREME Court yesterday ordered the Sandiganbayan which is hearing the corruption charges against jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada and his son, Jinggoy Estrada, to rule in two days on Jinggoy's bid to post bail.

The high court ordered the 3rd Division to "resolve" Jinggoy's bail petition "not later than 8:30 a.m. of 21 December 2001 and to make a report thereon" to the Supreme Court, the ruling said.

The Estrada father and son are detained without bail at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center while on trial for the crime of plunder, a non-bailable offense which is punishable by death.

The SC issued the resolution after a special en banc session.

Court employees were surprised that the full court convened a special session just to tackle the motion for bail of the young Estrada.

3 motions

The SC resolution stemmed from three motions which Jinggoy had filed this month with the SC—a motion to resolve his plea for provisional liberty (Dec. 11), a supplemental motion to resolve (Dec. 12), and an urgent motion for early/immediate resolution of his petition for bail for "medical/humanitarian considerations."

Just hours before the full court convened, Jinggoy filed a third motion to force the court to give due course to his plea.

Jinggoy' lawyers argued that there was an immediate need for the SC to rule on their client's motion for bail.

The lawyers said Dr. Roberto Anastacio, one of the "country's foremost cardiologists," found the young Estrada to be suffering from cardiac problems.

In a letter to the 3rd Division, Anastacio pointed to "psycho autonomic stress as the most important factor causing accused myocardial injury which could lead to a cardiac arrest."

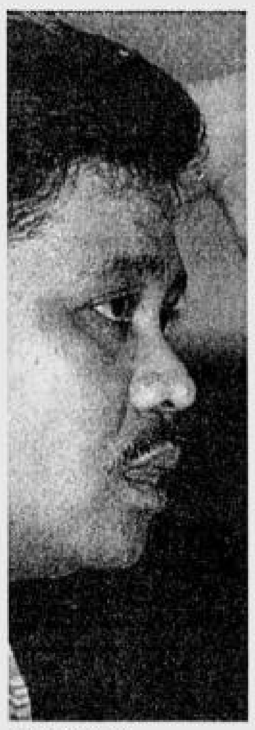
The heart doctor suggested that a hospital environment was not a normal environment for Jinggoy.

"He recommends that a return by accused to a normal environment, namely his home, is called for," the petition read.

The lawyers claimed that the 3rd Division had consistently refused to grant Jinggoy's motion for bail until he suffered chest pains on Dec. 5.

On Dec. 6, Jinggoy was brought to the Makati Medical Center where a series of tests showed that he was suffering from "new non-transmural myocardial infarction," the lawyers said.

"As early as the date of (Jinggoy's) motion in first week of August, accused Jinggoy Estrada was already suffering from a life-threatening heart ailment which condition might conceivably lead to cardiac arrest and sudden death," the petition read.


ESTRADA

Jinggoy is still confined at the Makati Medical Center. He will have to return to the VMMC in Quezon City when his treatment is completed.

'Legal basis'

The lawyers argued that allowing Jinggoy to post bail despite the prohibition imposed by the plunder law has "legal basis."

They cited several SC rulings, particularly "De la Rama vs People's Court," in which the high court held that the "illness of the prisoner, independently of the merits of the case, is a circumstance, and the humanity of the law makes it a consideration which should, regardless of the charge and the stage of the proceeding, influence the court to exercise its discretion to admit the prisoner to bail."

They asked the court to order the confinement of Jinggoy "in his home upon posting bail."

Earlier, Jinggoy claimed that the allegation that he took P15 million from tobacco excise taxes was pure "hearsay."

In a supplemental motion to resolve filed last week, Jinggoy reminded the Supreme Court of his pending motion to resolve his plea for provisional liberty.

Jinggoy was charged with plunder for allegedly conspiring with his father "in amassing and acquiring through ill-gotten wealth 'from illegal gambling' through any or a combination or a series of overt or criminal acts or similar schemes or means."

Gambling collector

He allegedly received or "collected directly or indirectly on several instances" P545,000, more or less, from illegal gambling.

Jinggoy's lawyers argued that the accusation against their client "was premised on pure, unadulterated and inadmissible hearsay."

The lawyers contended that Jinggoy's participation was limited to allegedly twice giving Emma Lim, an employee of former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, P1 million between January and February 2000.

The money allegedly came from illegal gambling pay-offs.

The lawyers argued that allegedly giving P2 million from "private funds" was not a heinous offense that is non-bailable.

The lawyers also said that Jinggoy's allegedly receiving P15 million in bribes from excise taxes was "pure hearsay" as he was "not mentioned or alluded to anywhere in regard to the Belle, GSIS, SSS and the Velarde accounts."

Jinggoy was "on the dock only for jueteng," for which the court cannot impose the death penalty or even *reclusion perpetua*, the lawyers said.

They therefore asked the high court to grant Jinggoy's plea for provisional liberty.

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Tight Senate sked irks Angara

By Cynthia D. Balana

CALL it reckless scheduling by the Senate majority but Sen. Edgardo Angara did not take this sitting down.

Yesterday, an irate Angara confronted the Senate leadership for scheduling at least four Commission on Appointments hearings at the time the Senate was pressed for time to pass the proposed national budget for next year.

At the same time, Angara asked the administration to recast its P772.5 billion "anti-poor" budget for next year by taking the bold step of allocating P29.8 billion more for crucial spending programs that will ease widespread poverty.

In his contra-budget speech, Angara said President Macapagal Arroyo should set aside conventional economic policies and baseless fears to carry out the budget overhaul because the poor "needs a measure of hope" and that a pro-poor national budget "will provide that ray of hope."

Angara described the budget and its spending programs as a "sub-maintenance allocation, both unfocused and unimaginative.

Angara also asked for explanation from Senate President Franklin Drilon why he allowed the overlapping of schedules in the first place.

"It is reckless not so much for the majority because you have the majority number, but that is not legislative work. The legislative work calls for give and take," he said.

Angara also chided Sen. Renato Cayetano, who defended the holding of four commission sub-committee hearings, insisting that the bicameral committee has a constitutional duty to schedule a number of hearings.

Cayetano reminded Angara that all senators, including those in the minority, must sacrifice their time to the extent of even staying in the session hall until the next morning just so they could finish their tasks.

Cayetano's statement did not sit well with Angara, who pointed out that it was the first time in the history of Congress that the leadership allowed overlapping hearings of the Commission on Appointments and floor debate on the budget.

"You can check that as a historical precedent. So that should be a lesson to the distinguished gentleman," Angara told Cayetano.

Angara said the budget deliberation on the national was far more important than the hearings the appointments of Commission on Audit chairman Guillermo Carague, Justice Secretary Hernando Perez, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho and several ambassadors.

Angara said that unlike the majority senators, there were only a few minority senators who found it difficult to attend all the hearings in order for the political opposition to be represented.

"I think we are not doing any justice to our roles and between the choice of having this budget passed and deliberated upon, I think the choice is quite clear," Angara said.

"This (budget) is of more national importance than the personal benefit that each of these (CA) nominees will receive today," he added.

Stressing that the opposition senators had been sacrificing by working even on weekends, Angara then asked Drilon to defer the confirmation hearings. Otherwise, these nominees would be blocked by the opposition during the plenary voting, he said.

He said his request was quite reasonable and should be accommodated by the majority.

"It is not a question of doing our work, we are doing more than our work and our share in the Senate," he said.

"I hope that everyone contributes equally in the making of laws in this Senate but no one can point to us as having defaulted in that regard," he added.

Senate passes budget with ₱8.5-B final cut

By Rocky Nazareno

THE SENATE passed on third reading last night the P772.5-billion national budget for next year, with the senators agreeing on a final cut of P8.5 billion from the original P780.5 billion approved by the House of Representatives.

After marathon hearings held since Tuesday last week, the Senate approved the measure 18-1. Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel voted against it "in protest of the harsh treatment given to Mindanao."

The senators agreed on a total of P13.785 billion in cuts and imposed increases totaling P6.198 billion.

Sen. John Osmeña, chair of the committee on finance, had earlier proposed a net cut of P13.8 billion from the P780.8-billion budget that the House approved.

The Senate version will now be submitted to a bicameral conference committee, where it will be reconciled with the House version.

According to Osmeña, the committee was set to start talks last night at the Edsa Shangri-La hotel in an effort to ratify a final version "Thursday night or Friday morning."

"Otherwise, Merry Christmas," he said.

The budget of the Philippine National Police was augmented by P1.75 billion, which would allow the hiring of 4,000 new policemen. That of the Army got an additional P623.6 million for the recruitment of 3,000 new enlisted personnel.

Interestingly, the Priority Development Assistance Fund, which corresponds to the pork barrel made available to lawmakers, was increased by P960 million.

Osmeña said he had reconsidered his first proposal to deduct P900 million from the budget of the Commission on Elections, which had pointed out that it needed more money to conduct the barangay polls next year.

"Instead, we are now adding P400 million. I told (the other senators) that if we are going to hold the barangay election, we might as well pour money into it," he said.

But Osmeña did not budge from his original proposal not to allocate a centavo to the Armed Forces' modernization fund, which would have gotten P10 billion.

The P3.8-billion cut in the Agrarian Reform Fund was reduced to P1.2 billion.

"(Opposition senators) Aquilino Pimentel and Edgardo Angara showed leadership in getting the minority to agree on the budget," Osmeña noted.

He said he commiserated with Pimentel, who had complained that Mindanao was getting a budget "not even half of what was given to Luzon."

"(Pimentel) may not know it, but it's worse than that because the Japanese government has stopped awarding foreign-assisted projects to Mindanao," Osmeña said.

Gloria wants more funds for tourism promotion

DESPITE the economic crisis, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday ordered the Department of Tourism to spend more for media promotions.

Ms Macapagal was apparently excited by a study made by McKinze and Associates claiming the tourism industry can create 5 million additional jobs and generate $7 billion in revenues "if properly developed."

The firm presented its findings during the Cabinet meeting yesterday.

"It's exciting news," presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said afterwards.

He did not say when the 5 million job-prospect will be felt.

Tiglao said the President made a "policy shift" yesterday for the tourism industry.

Until yesterday, the President concentrated on putting up the needed infrastructure for tourism.

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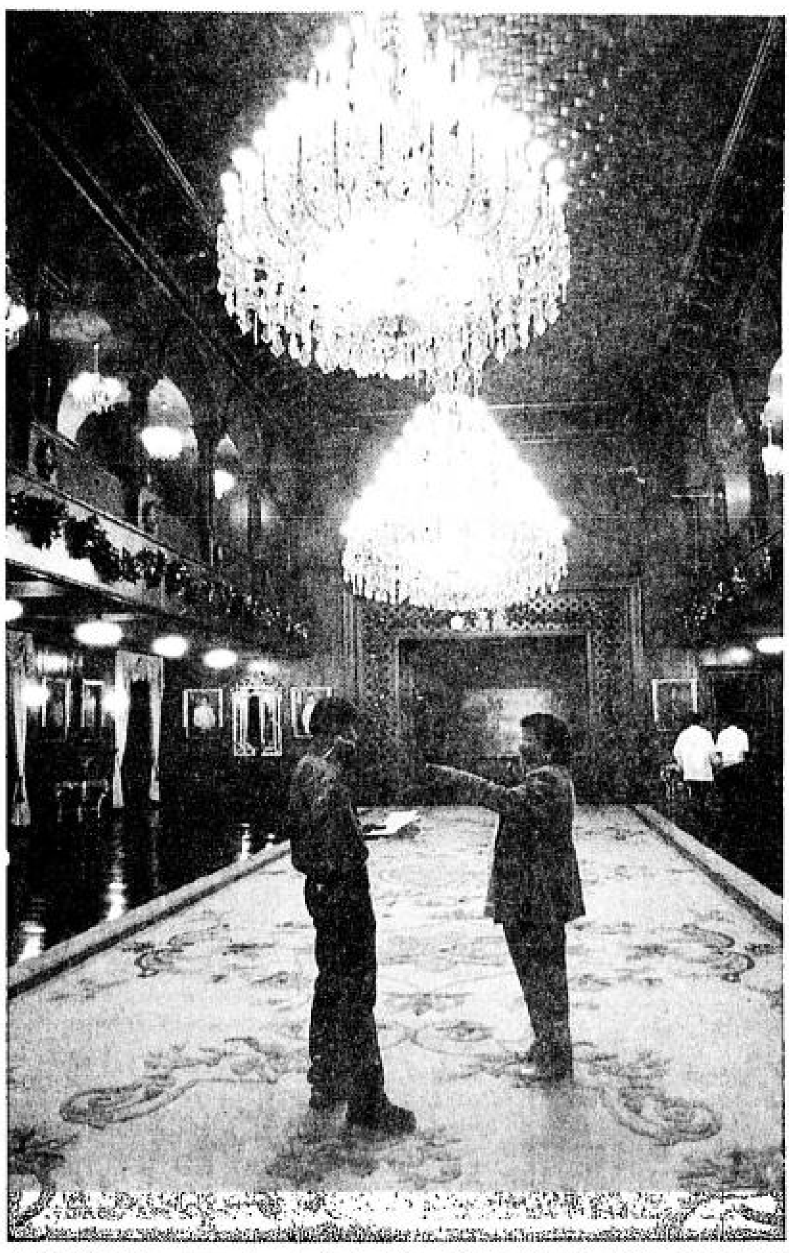
AND INTO the reception hall; the President's private office, seen here guarded by a Presidential Security Guard, was off limits to Marcelo.

.**THIS** was how Marita Jimenez, former appointments secretary of President Macapagal Arroyo, described to INQUIRER reporter Carlito Pablo the route that businessman Pacific Marcelo took in his controversial visit to Malacañang on Aug. 16 to disprove his claim that he went through the back door. The guided tour was intended to show that there was nothing clandestine about the visit.

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House wants to summon Serge O to Abu probe

By Juliet L. Javellana

THE HOUSE defense committee is bent on inviting Sen. Sergio Osmeña III to its inquiry on the reported collusion between the military and the Abu Sayyaf.

The re-opening of the inquiry scheduled today was postponed because former hostage Buddy Recio could not attend, according to chair Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. (Surigao del Sur, Lakas).

Pichay said Recio, who is in the US, promised to attend the hearing upon his return in January.

Rep. Magtanggol Gunigundo I, who chaired the committee's technical working group that drafts the report, had earlier announced in a press conference the committee's plan to summon Recio, his wife, son and sister-in-law who were also abducted and later freed by the Abu Sayyaf.

OSMEÑA

But Recio told the Inquirer that no one from the committee had told him so and was irked that Gunigundo spoke to the media first.

Recio added he would not attend because he would be out of the country.

The House committee had terminated its inquiry on allegations that ransom was paid for the release of hostages seized by the Abu Sayyaf and that the military colluded with the bandits in exchange for a part of the collections.

But the belated revelation of Osmeña forced the committee to re-open its inquiry.

Pichay said he wants to invite Osmeña to the House hearing despite the inter-parliamentary courtesy observed by tradition.

However, he said, he has not sent him a formal invitation yet.

Pichay said he would also ask the Senate defense committee, chaired by Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., to allow a joint inquiry.

This, he said, had to take place should Osmeña refuse to appear in the House.

Pichay said there is no need to ask Makati Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr. to explain his role in seeking the release of Angela Montealegre, Recio's sister-in-law.

Gunigundo had released the information without naming Locsin.

But Locsin admitted he was the one approached by Recio for help but stressed this was not to offer ransom. He said he was helping air an appeal to the Abu Sayyaf to release her because she had no money.

US court eyes bail for Atong

LAS VEGAS—Charlie "Atong" Ang, the former Philippine presidential adviser, wanted on capital charges of plunder in his home country, will remain in US custody until the new year, but a magistrate is considering whether to release him on bail next year ahead of his February extradition hearing.

Ang, 43, is facing the capital offense of plunder, or the theft of public funds. He is accused of funneling tobacco tax kickbacks and illegal payoffs from gambling to former President Joseph Estrada.

The former president is on trial for plunder during 31 months in office.

US District Magistrate Lawrence R. Leavitt in Las Vegas issued an order late Friday requiring the federal government to respond by Dec. 28 to Ang's request to be freed on bail pending a Feb. 28 extradition hearing. A hearing date would follow in January. *AP*

Gloria chides critics on HK workers' pay cut

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday chided an organization of Filipino workers in Hong Kong for saying she had agreed to the pay cuts imposed by the Hong Kong government on foreign domestic helpers.

Ms Macapagal said the government was continuing to appeal the 21.6 percent cut in minimum wages of foreign domestic helpers being imposed by the Hong Kong government.

"I don't know who is spreading the lies... They suddenly declared me persona non grata," Ms Macapagal said in an interview with dzRH.

About 150,000 Filipinos are employed in Hong Kong as domestic helpers.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas yesterday asked the militant groups to suspend their protests while the government tries to appeal to the Hong Kong authorities.

Sto. Tomas, who flew to Hong Kong yesterday, said the rallies were not strengthening the government's position.

The Hong Kong-based United Filipinos in Hong Kong declared Ms Macapagal "persona non grata" after she described a counter-proposal for a 5 to 10 percent wage cut as "a very, very good input" to the labor department.

The group took the President's words to mean that she was in favor of the wage cut.

"To begin with, can they speak on behalf of the 200,000 Filipinos there? There are many associations there. They should not present themselves as the representative of all the workers there," Ms Macapagal said.

In her weekly press conference last Friday, Ms Macapagal was told of the counter-proposals from some Filipinos in Hong Kong for a 5 to 10 percent wage cut, instead of the 21.6 percent imposed by the Hong Kong government.

The President said the proposal was a "very, very good input" and called the attention of labor and foreign affairs departments, which have been asked to appeal to the Hong Kong government.

Sto. Tomas said in a radio interview that she would meet with officials from India, Indonesia and Thailand, who also have many of their citizens working as domestic helpers in Hong Kong to assert their opposition to the wage cut.

But the militant Migrante International refused to believe Malacañang's pronouncements, insisting that the President has already agreed to a lower cut.

In a letter to presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao, Migrante secretary general Poe Gratela said Sto. Tomas was sent to work out a compromise with Hong Kong authorities and not to oppose the cut. *Dona Pazzibugan and Blanche S. Rivera*

2 students killed as car 'flies' off Baguio airport

BAGUIO CITY—Two students were killed and their three companions were badly hurt before dawn yesterday when their car plunged the runway of the Loakan Airport here, police said.

Police here asked the Air Transportation Office to verify if the runway had been the midnight venue for illegal drag racing activities because of the bizarre deaths of Rocky Ganggaraman and Angie Alejandro, both of this city.

The two students of the University of Baguio were crushed to death when their Toyota Corolla leaped off a 50-foot ravine at the edge of the airport runway at about 1:45 a.m., Chief Insp. Remigio Marcelino, chief of the Baguio police traffic division, said.

The vehicle's owner, UB student Paulo Torres, is now at the intensive care unit of the Baguio General Hospital, along with Cris Cripa and Joan Rarrat Bugtong. Police said Torres had been drinking.

"The vehicle was smashed. It apparently leaped off the end of the runway, sped past the Loakan Road that leads to the Philippine Military Academy, and flew off the ravine," Marcelino said in Filipino.

He said the ATO police had responded to the accident but they have yet to confirm whether the victims' car was the only vehicle at the runway.

Residents near the airport said they heard engines being revved up at the runway between 1 a.m. and 2 a.m.

Roger Bibal, a Loakan resident, said the ATO had allowed the neighborhood to open access through the runway to reach their homes on the other side of the airport.

Bibal said ATO officials were normally strict about access only during pre-scheduled commercial flights.

"But during evenings, they allow most vehicles entry. I don't really know if the runway was being used as a drag racing area. But we always hear motors revving during evenings. But we usually assume drag racing occurs on Loakan Road itself," he said.

"This is the first weird accident to hit the city airport," he added. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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Tree stress likely to cut RP coconut oil exports

COCONUT oil exports from the Philippines, the world's largest shipper of the commodity, is likely to fall by as much as 30 percent next year due to stressed trees, traders said on yesterday.

"This is not weather-related. This is simply tree stress after two-and-a-half years of good harvests," said Solomon de la Peña, a regional vegetable oil analyst based in Manila.

Exports are slated to slow to 980,000 tons from this year's estimate of around 1.4 million tons, traders said.

But they said the impact of the export slowdown from the Philippines, which supplies more than 60 percent of the world's trade in the oil, would not be felt till the second quarter of 2002 because of abundant stocks in the major markets of Europe and the United States.

Experts have said coconut trees usually show stress by having fewer or smaller nuts in the third year after two straight years of abundant harvests.

De la Peña forecast the 30-percent decline in coconut oil exports in 2002 from this year's 1.4 million tons.

Another trader with one of the country's largest coconut oil mills estimated a 28-percent drop to about one million tons.

De la Peña said the price of copra, dried coconut meat from which oil is extracted, delivered to mills in Quezon province has gone up to P10 per kg from P8 per kg in June due to tight supplies.

"Some mills are running out of raw materials to crush and are simply exhausting current copra inventories," he said.

The United Coconut Associations of the Philippines Inc. (UCASP), which represents local oil millers and refiners, said in a report that preliminary figures on exports from January to December 6 this year totaled 1,314,792 tons.

UCAP had previously forecast total exports of the commodity this year at 1.281 million tons.

The trade group said in the first six days of December alone, the country shipped 19,500 tons of coconut oil and dealers say total volume for the month could reach about 100,000 tons.

Traders said they expected exports to fall below the 100,000-ton per month level starting in February next year.

But they said coconut prices in Europe would likely hold at current levels of $330-$347.50 per ton on a cost-insurance-freight (CIF) basis for January to March deliveries in Rotterdam, because of abundant stocks.

Coconut oil stocks in Europe reached 126,957 tons as of Dec. 11, equivalent to about three months of requirement in that region, the trader with one of the Philippines' largest coconut oil mills said.

De la Peña said with the estimated 30 percent decline in exports next year, prices in Europe could easily jump by $50 per ton CIF from current levels.

In November, some Philippine traders predicted coconut oil prices in Europe to recover by an average of $451 per ton CIF next year, or the same average price as last year.

Traders forecast prices of coconut oil, which is mostly used in the oleochemicals industry to produce cosmetics, shampoos and detergent, in Europe to average $320 per ton CIF this year. *Reuters*

Comelec asks youth voters: Register now

By Blanche S. Rivera

DON'T blame us.

The Commission on Elections yesterday urged the youth to cooperate and register for the Sangguniang Kabataan elections in May next year even as the Comelec drums up its information campaign on the registration.

Comelec information officer Mila Desamito expressed confidence that the agency would meet the 11-million target turnout of registered youth voters before the deadline next week.

Desamito said the Comelec was maximizing all channels of information, including the media, to stress the SK and continuing registration for Filipino citizens aged 15 to 21.

"I really hope they register now, so no one will be blaming us when the registration date expires," Desamito said, adding the Comelec was "doing everything it can to spread the information on registration."

The Comelec has asked Education Secretary Raul Roco to issue a circular mandating principals nationwide to reiterate the registration in their schools.

Church help

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines was also tapped to urge the Catholic religious during Masses and other church activities to register either through the SK or continuing registration.

Desamito said the Comelec has even contacted food chains such as Chow King, Jollibee, McDonalds and Max's, to support the information campaign by having posters and streamers on the registration in their franchises.

Initial reports to the Comelec education and information department showed that 3,489 have applied for registration in Metro Manila, 2,384 in Region 1 and 1,020 in Zambales province from Dec. 10 to 15.

The Comelec has to reach five million voters aged 15 to 17 for the SK elections and six million voters aged 18 to 21 through the continuing registration for the next local and national elections.

'Hard to assess'

Desamito said it was "hard to assess" right now the feedback of the youth sector on the registration, but said she was confident that the Comelec would reach the target number of voters.

She said the figures from the other regions were not in yet, as well as the statistics on the number of those aged 18 to 21 who signed up since the continuing registration started in July.

The Comelec will come out with the final list of the newly registered voters on Feb. 5 as approved by the election regional board.

"I'm sure when school closes for the Christmas break, there will be more who will register because they will have the time," Desamito said.

The Comelec will be working even on Dec. 22 to 24 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to accommodate those who will register in their municipalities.

The SK elections will be held on May 6, after which the still uncertain barangay elections will take place on May 13.

Absentee voting, yes; overseas campaigning, no

TO BE fair, Congress should not allow candidates to go overseas to campaign if the absentee-voting bill covering at least seven million Filipinos abroad is passed into law this year.

The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration said allowing campaign overseas would also tax embassy officials who would be mandated to escort the candidates.

Owwa chief Wilhelm Soriano said such duties could also be deemed as a bias on the part of the embassy and labor officials, who are appointed by the administration.

Soriano urged Congress to include provisions in the absentee-voting bill to isolate embassy officials of the Philippines abroad from the politics here.

"There should be prohibitory provisions for major players not to have influence on the process," Soriano said in an earlier interview.

He said Congress should first come up with clear definitions on the role of the Owwa, Department of Foreign Affairs and Department of Labor and Employment on the campaign.

He added that it would be better if the candidates can simply post a bulletin board in the Philippine consular offices about their parties and platforms. *Blanche S. Rivera*

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NEWSBRIEFS

GLORIA'S ADVISER

Cesar N. Sarino takes his oath as Presidential Adviser before President Macapagal-Arroyo in recent oath-taking ceremonies at Malacañang. Witnessing are: Mrs. Teena Sarino and children Mariciris, CJ and C3. Sarino served as secretary of interior and local government during the time of former President Corazon C. Aquino and president and general manager of GSIS under former President Fidel V. Ramos.

Gordon bats for tourism 'mindset'

THE COUNTRY will successfully reap the economic and psychic benefits of domestic tourism with the emergence of a "cultural mindset" for tourism among Filipinos. This was the assessment of Tourism Secretary Richard J. Gordon who said that DOT efforts to put together exciting and affordable domestic tour packages for the yearend holidays are geared toward creating that required "cultural mindset for tourism."

In a press statement, Gordon said: "The people need to be both encouraged and serviced properly to spur domestic travel." He added that "many think they cannot travel to Palawan or to Boracay because they are poor. But there are many of those who think this way actually have the means to travel if only they had the mindset for tourism. They can save up for travel or be pro-active in building groups to travel with to avail of larger group discounts."

The tourism chief also said that it is important that people understand that their travel initiatives enable development to spread to the countryside. The impact of tourism cuts through many sectors, from agriculture to transportation and communication, from arts and gifts trade to construction, hotels and accommodations sectors.

He said this is partly the reason why tourism is now the world's No. 1 industry with global arrivals in 2000 numbering 700 million.

He said that the DOT, therefore, is now aggressively disseminating information on affordable tour packages.

GORDON

A menu of such affordable packages has been worked out by the DOT in coordination with the Philippine Tour Operators Association. They have been also advertised in national dailies.

The "WOW Philippines!" weekend packages are also supported by the Philippine Convention and Visitors Corp., BPI Credit Cards, Asian Spirit, Air Philippines, Philtranco, WG&A and SEAir.

Travel experiences and businesses spurred by the recent long weekend covering the holidays of All Saint's Day and All Soul's Day provided an example on the role of tourism in the economy.

Malacañang has declared Dec. 24 and Dec. 31 as non-working holidays, providing two long weekends for holiday revelers.

Misuari in Libya another option

MALACAÑANG said Libya's reported offer to take Nur Misuari into custody is one of the options being considered for the former rebel-turned-governor of the Muslim autonomous region.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's Spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said the government was looking at various options after Misuari is released from detention in Malaysia.

The Libyan government has not officially notified the government of such an intention, however.

Libya is a member of the Organization of Islamic Conference Committee of the Eight that brokered the 1996 peace pact between the Moro National Liberation Front then led by Misuari and the government.

Tiglao the other day said the government was looking at exile to a third country as a "real option."

But he said the most likely option was for Misuari to be brought back to the country to face rebellion charges.

Authorities had said earlier that Kuala Lumpur would deport Misuari "on or before Dec. 24," the end of Misuari's 30-day detention for illegally entering Malaysia. *Dona Pazzibugan*

NBI chief warns Sandigan employees

SANDIGANBAYAN employees refusing to cooperate in the investigation of Associate Justice Ancaleto Badoy's missing resolution could face charges, said National Bureau of Investigation Director Reynaldo Wycoco.

"There are adequate laws for that. It's a crime called obstruction of justice," Wycoco said.

NBI agents have complained that some of Badoy's employees have refused to undergo lie detector tests, give fingerprint samples or sworn statements.

While maintaining that the employees have their legal rights, Wycoco said investigators would try to find out if the employees were deliberately hiding something from authorities.

The NBI is investigating the alleged theft of a court resolution ordering jailed ex-president Joseph Estrada's transfer from the Veteran's Memorial Medical Center to a detention cell at Fort Sto. Domingo, Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

But the employees said they were waiting for Badoy to execute a sworn statement that the resolution was indeed stolen, an NBI source said.

They fear that the justice might have just misplaced the document, the source added. *Philip C. Tubeza*

New oil player offers biggest price cut

NEW player Unioil Petroleum Phil. yesterday announced it had slashed its petroleum prices by more than double the rollback of the oil majors.

Unioil, in a statement, said it reduced the price of its gasoline by 70 centavos per liter, diesel by 50 centavos and kerosene by 30 centavos effective yesterday.

All the other oil companies had reduced their prices by only 30 centavos per liter.

"Unioil's move is to give the public what they truly deserve," the company said.

Almost all the players are giving huge discounts but these are limited to their industrial customers only, it added.

"Unioil feels that the public in general, not just the industrial customers, deserve to fully enjoy this worldwide trend in petroleum prices," it said.

Aside from pump prices, the oil majors and the new firms also reduced the price of liquefied petroleum gas by P1 per kilo.

The price cuts were the 11th this year and the sixth since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks against the United States. Prices were last reduced on Dec. 3. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

Physics teachers attend workshop

TWENTY-SEVEN teachers from 15 colleges and universities in Metro Manila participated in a seminar-workshop aimed at upgrading their teaching competencies in handling college physics for engineering courses.

Sponsored by FUSE (Foundation for Upgrading the Standard Education), the workshop held Dec. 3 to 7 at the College of Engineering Building of Far Eastern University discussed techniques that would make the subject easier for the students to understand and appreciate.

The participants, mostly graduates of engineering courses, came from Adamson University, AMA-Makati, Central Colleges of the Philippines, Far Eastern University, Feati University, Lyceum of the Philippines, MLQ University, Namei Polytechnic Institute;

National University, New Era University, Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, Philippine State College of Aeronautics, Roosevelt College, TIP-Quezon City and University of Perpetual Help of Rizal.

FUSE lecturers—engineers Hernani G. Samson and Carmencita A. Surban—provided participants with test questions on specified topics, visual aids for teaching College Physics 1 and solutions to problems in the subject. The group also took up instructional exercises on thermo dynamics, Newton's Law and the theory about elasticity and equilibrium.

The two explained to the participants the techniques that would make the study of physics more interesting and easier for the students to understand.

"Each participant is expected to be more competent in teaching College Physics 1," said Dr. Peter M. Ureta, FUSE board of trustee and dean of Far Eastern University's College of Engineering. "He or she must be able to echo the seminar-workshop to other faculty members in his/her institution. Student failure in College Physics 1 is also expected to lessen."

He said workshops on college physics have been held in Baguio, Iloilo, Davao and Cagayan de Oro cities. The Naga workshop is scheduled Feb. 19 to 23 and Cebu City in April 2002.

Filipina heads int'l folk art organization

THE INTERNATIONAL Organization of Folk Art has elected a Filipino as president for the next four-year working period—a first, according to its secretary general Alexander Veigl.

Carmen D. Padilla is also the organization's first woman president. She was elected by delegates from 50 countries at their recent general meeting in Deva, Romania.

Veigl also said a record number of 34 women would hold office in the organization's Executive Council.

PADILLA

Padilla, now chief of staff of Senate President Franklin Drilon, is scheduled to meet in Hungary with the organization's executive secretaries general to discuss their respective continents' future involvement.

Camacho, other Cabinet men headed for bypass

BY ROCKY NAZARENO AND CLARISSA S. BATINO

DESPITE the presence and support of the most prominent members of the business community, the congressional Commission on Appointments yesterday failed to confirm the appointment of Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho who is likely to be bypassed.

The commission holds its last hearing today before going into its Christmas break and there seems little hope that the confirmation of Camacho, Justice Secretary Hernando Perez and Commission on Audit chair Guillermo Carague could be considered by the CA plenary.

The biggest names in Philippine business led by Ayala Corp. chair Jaime Zobel de Ayala trooped to the Senate yesterday to demonstrate their support for Camacho.

"I will take Camacho anytime over Senator (Tessie Aquino) Oreta. We know he is a good man and we need people like him in the government," said Jose Cuisia Jr., chair of the Philamlife Group and a former central bank governor.

But the Senate screening committee decided to defer the consideration of Camacho, whose name is being dragged into a P1.3-billion allegedly irregular bonds auction involving his sister Marissa Camacho Reyes and the Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., to Jan. 4.

This means that Camacho is effectively bypassed and would need to be reappointed by the President.

Opposition Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta insisted that she still had some questions to ask of Camacho as it was her duty to determine whether or not he was fit to handle the finance portfolio.

One of the issues raised against Camacho in a previous hearing was the presence of posters in front of his Urdaneta Village residence containing allegedly derogatory remarks against Oreta during the Edsa 2 revolution.

The CA committee on justice has also deferred the confirmation of Perez for its next hearing on Jan. 15.

Another opposition senator, Sen. Sergio Osmeña III, asked for more time so he could question Perez about his involvement in the granting of a controversial power contract to the Argentinian power firm IMPSA.

Also likely to be bypassed are secretaries Pantaleon Alvarez (transportation and communications), Heherson Alvarez (environment) and Estrella Alabastro (science and technology) and Commission on Elections chair Alfredo Benipayo as their confirmation has yet to be endorsed by the committees concerned.

Expected to be endorsed and considered by the CA plenary are the appointments of Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, National Economic Development Authority Director General Dante Canlas and Armed Forces Chief Gen. Domingo Villanueva.

Cuisia said nobody had organized a cheering squad for Camacho. He said each of those present yesterday went to the Senate of their own accord.

Even the Chinese-Filipino businessmen showed up for the finance secretary who was overwhelmed by the presence of friends and colleagues.

"This is boosting my morale," said Camacho who remained on the edge the whole time outside the hearing room while he was waiting for his turn that never came.

Alfonso Siy, a director of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc., said Camacho "is one of the most intelligent members of the economic team."

Dr. Teyet Pascual, an art collector who claimed never to have attended a Senate hearing came with Camacho's parents-in-law yesterday. Pascual is the godfather of one of Camacho's six children.

Camacho's immediate family like his mother Narda and wife Kim did not show up, however.

"I am here because I am a friend of Lito and I have very few friends," said Pascual.

Leonilo Coronel, executive director of the Bankers' Association of the Philippines said the banking community "would hate to lose somebody like Camacho" just because of politics.

Guillermo Luz, executive director of the Makati Business Club said Camacho had done a good job of promoting the Philippines to foreign investors.

"If you look at the finance secretary on the basis of integrity, competence, and international experience, he is certainly qualified. He was a good energy secretary and is as good as finance chief," said Luz.

Sergio Ortiz-Luis, president of the Philippine Exporters Confederation, also expressed support for the finance secretary.

RCBC officials led by chair Alfonso Yuchengco went to the Senate to explain the bank's side on the allegedly anomalous transaction involving Camacho's sister and to clear the name of the finance secretary.

Finance Undersecretary Cornelio Gison has explained that Camacho had completely inhibited himself from the process involving the issuance of the P30 billion zero-coupon bonds that was allegedly cornered by RCBC and resold to Code-NGO, a group headed by Camacho's sister.

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German paper says Naia deal to be reviewed

THE GOVERNMENT and the consortium building Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport will renegotiate the terms of the controversial P32.5 billion contract, according to a major German financial newspaper.

Handelsblatt newspaper, in recent editions, said the renegotiation comes amid reports of corruption and controversy surrounding the contract to build Naia 3 between the government and the Philippine International Air Terminal Co. Inc. (Piatco).

Piatco, which is 70-percent owned by the German airport management company Fraport AG, is currently constructing the airport terminal.

The German paper, in its Nov. 26 issue, said the project had become a burden rather than an advantage to Fraport, the company which operates the Frankfurt Airport, after the name of the firm was dragged into controversies that surfaced surrounding the deal.

"Fraport AG is seeing its first prestige project in Asia turning into a financial disaster," the newspaper said.

In a follow-up article on Dec. 11, Handelsblatt said that the Philippine government, represented by newly appointed presidential adviser for special projects Gloria Tan-Climaco, and Fraport, were geared to re-negotiate the contract on the construction and operation of Naia 3.

It said major projects had been removed from the portfolio of Transportation and Communication Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez and passed to Climaco.

"Like (President Macapagal) Arroyo, Climaco has a reputation for probity and incorruptibility," Handelsblatt said.

According to the report, Fraport's four major creditors—Kreditanstalt fur Wiederaufbau, Germany's state-owned development bank with $160 million; World Bank unit IFC with $105 million; Dresdner Bank with $95 million and Asia Development Bank with $60 million—are demanding that the original terms granted by the Estrada administration be adhered to during the renegotiations before they release credits to Fraport.

Fraport has been using its own money in the initial construction of the Naia 3, estimated at around $300 million.

Eye of the storm

Alvarez has found himself at the center of the Piatco storm for allegedly holding interests in a firm that won a sub-contract in the project. Alvarez has maintained that he had divested himself of the firm, but a group of airport service operators has filed a plunder case against him.

He said he was merely implementing a contract forged during the term of ousted President Joseph Estrada.

Handelsblatt said the problem for Fraport, which has been active in the Philippines since 1998, is that the local press has been portraying the Terminal 3 project as a typical example of the so-called crony capitalism that is seen to have flourished under the presidency of Estrada.

Gloria: Time to move on

BY CARLITO PABLO

WE'VE met the challenges. It's time to move on.

This is the theme of President Macapagal-Arroyo's yearend report, which she will read to investors on Thursday and to the nation via television on Friday.

Presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said the report would be both a recap of the performance of the Macapagal administration and the President's New Year's message to the nation.

"The message is that we have met economic and political challenges. It's time to move on. It's time to concentrate on the momentum of growth," Tiglao said.

The yearend report, titled "Ulat sa Bayan," was presented to the Cabinet secretaries at their regular Tuesday meeting yesterday.

Tiglao said the Macapagal administration had successfully weathered various "political threats and problems" as well as the world economic slowdown caused by the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the United States.

"We managed (to register) a respectable growth rate. Economists have determined that we are one of the best performers in the region," Tiglao said.

The President will address an investors' meeting at the Central Bank on Thursday and will also receive a report from the country's economic managers.

"They (economic managers) will discuss the remarkable gains we made considering the difficult situation," Tiglao said.

The 11-month-old Macapagal administration fought off an attempt by supporters of jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada to storm Malacañang May 1 and has withstood persistent rumors of coups and destabilization campaigns.

The government is also fighting insistent criticism and allegations of corruption against First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo and President Macapagal-Arroyo herself.

In Mindanao, government forces are facing war on two fronts: the armed loyalists of former Nur Misuari, the former governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, and the bandit group Abu Sayyaf which is holding two American hostages.

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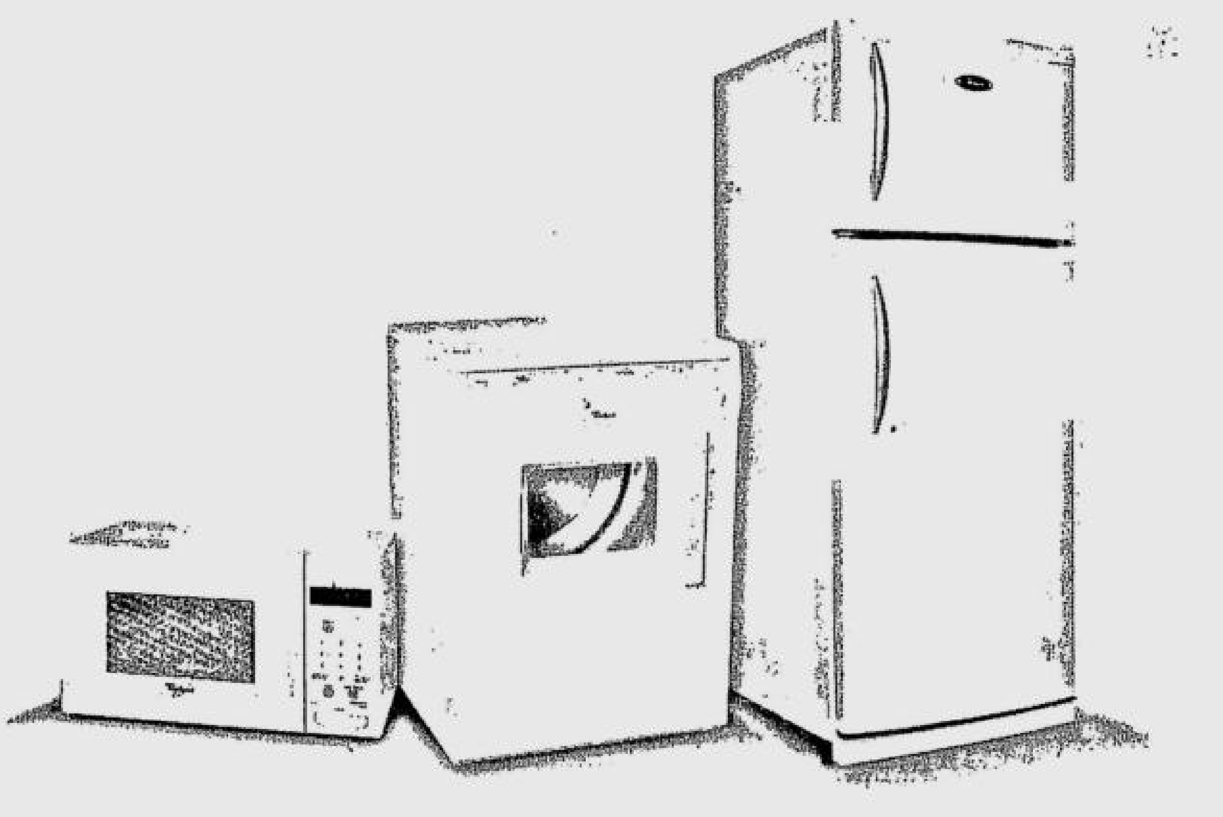

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Turtle in water

EDITORIAL

THEY wanted to get it straight from the horse's mouth, and that's exactly where administration officials got it from. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad declared Sunday that if the Philippine government didn't want to get back rebel leader Nur Misuari, Malaysia had no intention of detaining him much longer since he had not violated any of that country's laws. "If Manila does not accept him, we would be forced to send him to another place," Mahathir warned.

Filipino officials should have known that as early as 10 days ago when a top Malaysian police official said they could not find any evidence linking Misuari to last year's raid on the Malaysian resort of Sipadan and the kidnapping of 21 tourists and resort workers. The same message became even clearer when Mahathir's deputy, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, said that his government was discussing thoroughly the possibility of sending the renegade former governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao to a third country. After all, Malaysian officials seldom, if ever, disagree publicly about policy.

However, Philippine government officials either could not get the hints that were as broad and clear as daylight or they chose to play dumb, hoping Malaysia could be persuaded to deal first with Misuari. Over the weekend, President Macapagal announced that she had dispatched her assistant for special concerns, Norberto Gonzales, to talk with Mahathir through some back channel. Gonzales went home apparently without getting to see Mahathir. Instead what the administration got was not only a precise statement from Mahathir himself of Malaysia's intention to either release Misuari or ship him to anther country but also a stinging rebuff of Ms Macapagal's express wish for Malaysia to keep Misuari in jail.

Now administration officials are reduced to making excuses for the delay in asking Malaysia for Misuari's repatriation, citing the need to draw up protocols for his repatriation or even debating where to jail him. All this temporizing only shows that up to this time, about a month after Misuari tried to relaunch his separatist rebellion, the government still cannot decide what to do with him. While earlier the administration indicated that it would not look kindly on any country that would give Misuari asylum, now Presidential Spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao says asylum is "a real option." He said the government might allow exile if it is deemed to be "the best for us." Besides, he added, that option would allow Misuari to maintain his dignity.

Why letting Misuari keep his dignity should figure at all in the government's decision-making process escapes us completely. Is it because Misuari is a former ARMM governor? That only makes his disloyalty to the republic and his betrayal worse. Misuari didn't just lead his men to the slaughter, he drove dozens of them to certain death when he ordered them to attack several military outposts in Sulu last month. And now the government is considering the idea of letting him live in exile abroad so he can preserve his dignity?

Misuari deserves to be in jail for causing the deaths of more than a hundred civilians and Moro National Liberation Front fighters loyal to him. He also deserves to be tried for the plunder of billions in development funds given to the ARMM. And he should be tried and imprisoned here, and not enjoy his ill-gotten wealth in some Middle Eastern country.

Exile for Misuari is not punishment. Living abroad is what he wants. In fact, that's what he did most of the time when the MNLF was waging a war of secession from the early 1970s up to the mid-1980s. And travel was what he did for most of the five years that he was ARMM governor. If the government sends Misuari into exile, it would be no wiser than the monkey who threw the turtle into the water.

Two-edged sword

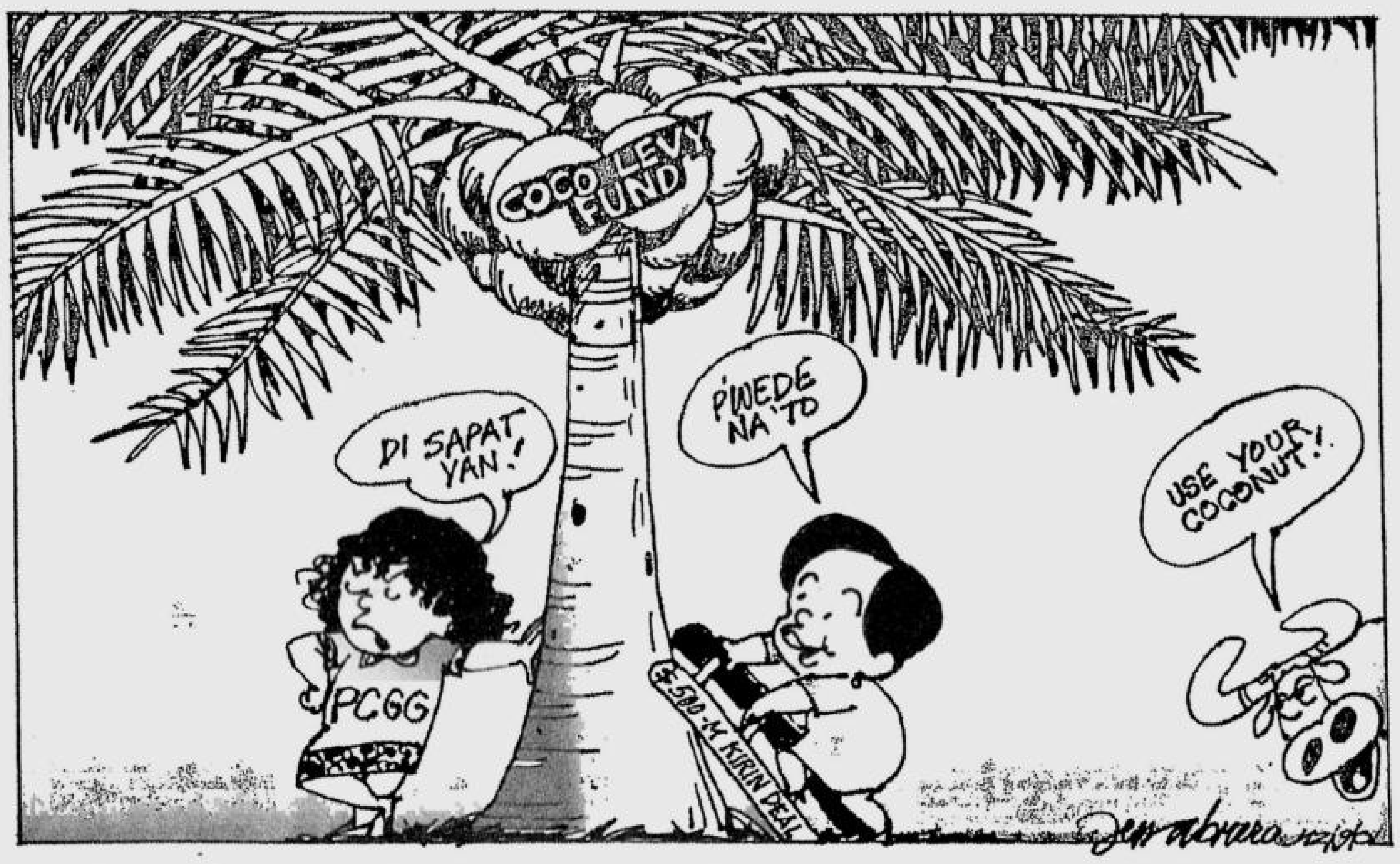
FOREIGN COMMENT

IT is a strong symbol that the American administration—three months after the attacks on New York and Washington—announced the destruction of al-Qaida bases in Afghanistan and the indictment of someone who is said to be the "20th man" of the suicide-hijackers, French national Zacarias Moussaoui.

Nevertheless, Donald Rumsfeld has repeated that the war on terrorism is far from over. International terrorism is like the image of Hercules battling the Lernean Hydra: as soon as one head is cut off, more heads grow in its place.

At the same time Bush brandishes a two-edged sword. He has to intensify the financial tracking and policing of terrorist networks. He also has to employ democratization and economic development to heal wounds poisoned by fanatical Islam.

Liberation (Paris)



Coco levy: The cure may be worse than the disease

(Continued from yesterday)

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE SUPREME irony in the coconut industry is that coconut farmers are now starving and yet they own one of the biggest banks in the country, the United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB). The First United Bank, which became the UCPB, was bought almost entirely with coconut levy funds. Therefore, it is almost wholly owned by coconut farmers.

UCPB money, or coco levy money, was in turn used to buy, capitalize, organize and operate a number of corporations with interlocking directorships, the common denominator of which is Eduardo Cojuangco, including the biggest conglomerate in the Philippines, San Miguel Corp. which is 27 percent owned by the coco levy funds. Technically, therefore, the coconut farmers who paid the coco levy and therefore own it, should be wallowing in wealth. So why are they starving?

Alas, by some magic worthy of Dumbledore, Merlin or, more accurately, Morgan Le Fay, the billions of levy money collected from coconut farmers appeared to have disintegrated into the ownership not of farmers but of rich individuals and dummy companies. The Commission on Audit under the leadership of then Chair Teofisto Guingona, in coordination with then Philcoa Administrator Oscar Santos, found out after the 1986 Edsa Revolution that 77.9 percent of the UCPB's equity was in the names of only 11 individuals and companies.

They were: Eduardo Cojuangco Jr., 54 million shares; ECJ & Sons Agri Enterprises, 54 million; Balete Ranch Inc. (ECJ), 14 million; Christensen Plantation (ECJ), 9 million; J.M. Pineda Jr. (ECJ), 37 million; NM Pineda (ECJ), 37 million; Danilo Ursua (ECJ), 37 million; Kabangkalan Sugar (ECJ), 700,000 shares; Accra Investments Corp., 14 million; Jaka Investments (JPE), 7 million; and Ma. Clara Lobregat, 2 million.

Had the Supreme Court, therefore, declared the coco levy as "private" funds, the UCPB and the other corporations it financed would have been owned by these lucky individuals and companies, not by the farmers who paid for it.

Farmers' organizations think that if the coco levy funds were declared "private" funds, the money would be returned to them, the coconut farmers. Yet how will you determine who is the genuine coconut farmer? And how do you determine how much to refund to the individual coco farmer?

The Cocofed, headed for decades by Lobregat, is composed mostly of big landowners, not the poor coconut farmers who actually work the farms and are in most need of help. Most of the coco levy receipts, on which would be based the amount of refund to each individual, have already been bought by the rich landowners. Moreover, from August 1973 to August 1982, no receipts were issued to the farmers for their payment of the coco levy under the Coconut Consumers Stabilization Fund (CCSF).

Luckily, the high court declared the coco levy funds as "public" funds which means they would go to the government. But that does not mean that the war over the coco levy is over. Only one battle has been won, but the war is far from over. At least 10 civil cases (maybe more) involving the coco levy are pending in the Sandiganbayan. And although the Supreme Court has given the Sandiganbayan six months to finish the main case, it does not mean all the cases will be finished by that time, considering the Sandiganbayan's record of super slowness in deciding cases.

Moreover, more new suits and appeals will surely be filed by the losing parties and by the Presidential Commission on Good Government which also has a record of super slowness in prosecuting cases. For we are talking here of P130 billion and with such a huge amount of money at stake, you can be sure that many powerful and influential people will fight to the death to get their hands on that loot. Winning the war for the coco levy is like finding Yamashita's Treasure and King Solomon's Mines combined.

Moreover, now that PCGG nominees can sit in the boards of the UCPB, San Miguel and the other coco levy-derived corporations and collect fat emoluments, they may not be eager to finish the cases quickly. Why finish them when you are already sitting on gold mines? In fact, that is the reason PCGG cases have been pending for the last 16 years. The PCGG fiscal agents don't want to give up a good thing.

The fiscal agents sit in the boards of sequestered corporations allegedly to preserve the assets of these firms. But instead of preserving them, these firms are being run to the ground. They are being run like milking cows. Just one example is the Times Journal newspaper group. From a money-earning publication, it is now a money-losing one, after a series of fiscal agents from different administrations took turns in running it.

So the fastest way to settle the issue is to have Congress pass a bill declaring the coco levy funds in no uncertain terms as public funds, according to former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, Philcoa Administrator Danilo Coronacion and Jesus Arranza of the Coconut Millers Association, who were guests at the Kapihan sa Manila forum last Monday. But they admit that the cure may be worse than the disease, considering the concupiscent ways of legislators. The money, they fear, may just disappear into the pork barrel of congressmen and senators and other appropriations that the imaginative and resourceful lawmakers can think of.

Already, Malacañang has formed a team to decide how to spend all that money. In the first place, the law and the presidential decrees that imposed the coco levy already spelled out where the money should go—to help the coconut industry and ultimately the farmers—so why is it necessary to form a team to decide how to spend it?

Already, salivating groups are circling the fat carcass of the coco levy funds like vultures, hyenas and jackals. In the end, the funds may just disappear into the pockets of the most disgusting of all scavengers—humans. And the owners of the funds, the coconut farmers, may be left to starve.

* * *

Comments are welcome at asiseeit@pacific.net.ph

Light in the dark

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I READ Newsweek's scathing attack on Noam Chomsky, Edward Said and other American critics of the war in Afghanistan, depicting them to be reactionaries, or people who left their minds in the 1960s. Well, look at the Cold War rhetoric of their detractors—they just substituted terrorism for communism, but the discourse is the same—and see if they did not leave their minds in an even remoter past.

I've read commentaries as well, in the newspapers and the e-mail, saying the tape showing Osama bin Laden to have masterminded the Sept. 11 attacks clinches the argument. America's action in Afghanistan is fully justified. Why so? Bin Laden's guilt was never the issue, the American response to it was. The wisdom of the American war in Afghanistan was. The issue of the bombing of Afghanistan was. The issue of whether or not that was the only acceptable course of action was.

Contrary to CNN and BBC, that issue was never settled in the direction of overwhelming worldwide support for the US action. I'm reprinting parts of David Miller's long article on this subject. Miller works for the Stifling Media Research Institute in Glasgow, Scotland, and stayed in the United States for several weeks after Sept. 11 for his research. His findings confirm what people who refuse to be stampeded into looking at the world in black and white have suspected all along—that the world teems with others like them.

Miller writes:

"According to Tony Blair and George Bush respectively, 'world opinion' and the 'collective will of the world' supported the attack on Afghanistan. Yet analysis of international opinion polls shows that with only three exceptions, majorities in all countries polled have opposed the policy of the US and UK governments. Furthermore there have been consistent majorities against the current action in the UK and sizeable numbers of the US population had reservations about the bombing.

"The biggest poll of world opinion was carried out by Gallup International in 37 countries in late September. It found that apart from the US, Israel and India, a majority of people in every country surveyed preferred extradition and trial of suspects to a US attack. Clear and sizeable majorities were recorded in the UK (75 percent) and across Western Europe from 67 percent in France to 87 percent in Switzerland. Between 64 percent (Czech Republic) and 83 percent (Lithuania)of Eastern Europeans concurred as did varying majorities in Korea, Pakistan, South Africa and Zimbabwe. An even more emphatic answer obtained in Latin America where between 80 percent (Panama) and 94 percent (Mexico) favored extradition.

"Meanwhile in Russia polls before and after the bombing show majorities opposed to the attacks. One slogan, which reportedly commanded majority support doing the rounds in Moscow at the end of September, was 'World War III—Without Russia.' After the bombing started, Interfax reported a Gallup International poll showing a majority of Moscow residents against the US military action.

"Where questions about aid or alternatives to bombing are asked, the results have been consistent: clear and sometimes massive majorities against the bombing. In an ignored poll, the Scottish Sunday Mail found that fully 69 percent of Scots favored sanctions, diplomacy or bringing Bin Laden to trial. Only 17 percent favored his execution and a minuscule 5 percent supported bombing. The Herald in Glasgow also found only 6 percent favored the then current policy of bombing alone (3 November). Between the start of the bombing and the fall of Kabul (with the exception of the single question in the Guardian poll showing 54 percent in favor of a pause in bombing), not a single polling company asked the British public any questions about alternatives to war.

"It comes as a surprise to many in the UK and US to discover that opinion is so markedly opposed to or ambivalent about the current action. One key reason is that the polls have been systematically misreported in the media. Both television and the press in the US and UK have continued to insist that massive majorities support the bombing. Senior BBC journalists have expressed surprise and disbelief when shown the evidence from the opinion polls.

"TV news reporters have routinely covered demonstrations in Britain and the US as if they represent only a small minority of opinion. The underlying assumption is that demonstrators only represent themselves rather than seeing them as an expression of a larger constituency of dissent. Thus BBC reporters claim that 'the opinion polls say that a majority of UK public opinion backs the war' or in reporting the demonstrations in London that 'Despite the strength of feelings here today those opposed to military action are still very much in the minority.' These reports are at best naïve, at worst mendacious, and a clear violation of the legal requirement of the BBC to be balanced.

"In the US, dissent has been markedly harder to find in the news media. The pictures of dead children featured in the rest of the world press have been hard to find and the debate on the use of cluster bombs and the 'daisy cutter' bombs (a weapon of mass destruction) which were debated in the mainstream UK media in late October were almost non-existent on the television news in the US.

"Furthermore there is evidence that dissent in the US is being underrepresented in responses to opinion polls. In a Gallup poll, 31 percent agreed that the attacks on the US had made them 'less likely to say things that might be unpopular.' And opposition to the war is pretty unpopular in media coverage of the war. When Bill Maher, host of the Politically Incorrect chat show criticized remarks by Bush describing the WTC attackers as 'cowards', the White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said: 'There are reminders to all Americans that they need to watch what they do, and this is not a time for remarks like that'.

"His show lost advertisers and was dropped by some networks."

* * *

Comments are welcome at dequiros@vasia.com

US schools, publishers scramble to explain Islam

FEATURE

Andrea Shalal-Esa

WASHINGTON—The Sept. 11 attacks on New York and Washington and the subsequent war in Afghanistan have generated an enormous amount of interest in Islam, and schools, publishers and the media are scrambling to meet the new demand.

The American Muslim Council this month sent to government agencies about 10,000 copies of a full-color brochure explaining the basic tenets of Islam, which has over one billion believers worldwide and is the fastest-growing religion in the United States.

"On Sept. 12 and Sept. 13, the phone was just ringing and ringing nonstop," said Zulfiya Kadir, a spokesperson for the group. "All kinds of people were looking for information or wanting to express their opinion. Most of them were supportive."

Kadir said she was stunned by the surge in interest in all things having to do with Islam, ranging from basic questions about the principles of the religion to detailed queries such as whether autopsies were permitted in Islam.

She said her organization was gratified by the huge amount of space and air time devoted by the mainstream US media in recent months to Islam and the 7 million Muslims who live in the United States.

"Every day we can see news and programs about Islam. I have never seen this before," she said. "Even one year ago, it was a challenge to find information about Islam. You had to search online for hours, but now it's everywhere."

Scholastic Corp. <SCHL.O>, a large children's publishing and media company, responded quickly after the Sept. 11 attacks and President George W. Bush's call to avoid discriminating against Muslim or Arab Americans.

The company, which reaches 25 million children in nearly every school across the United States, issued weekly magazines crammed full with information about the attacks, maps of Afghanistan and Muslims—all replete with calls for tolerance.

"We've gotten thousands upon thousands upon thousands of responses from teachers and also, obviously, students," said David Goddy, editor in chief of Scholastic Magazines.

"They've been asking for, and we've been providing, a large volume of material," he said.

Goddy said Scholastic had been including Islam in its coverage of world religions for at least five years, driven partly by rising immigration to the United States from Muslim countries and growing openness by teachers.

"The difference is that...where people are ignorant, they admit their ignorance, that people are open to learning about Ramadan and the holidays of other religions," Goddy said. "More and more across the country, they are doing more to teach children about all of the different religions and the holidays. I think it's significantly more inclusive these days than it was even five or 10 years ago."

Scholastic, which publishes 30 magazines and a large website (www.scholastic.com), covers the five major world religions—Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism—in its magazines and publications, Goddy said.

As well as providing basic information to students at all levels, Scholastic has also raised concerns about civil liberties violations and discrimination against Arab and Muslim Americans.

The company also launched a new campaign this fall, entitled "Keep the cool in school," which is aimed at curbing verbal abuse and violence in the nation's schools.

The campaign, developed together with child trauma expert Dr. Bruce Perry, emphasizes the skills children need to grow up to be healthy, caring individuals who value diversity, Goddy said.

The campaign grew out of the company's concern about violence in schools and school shootings, but has proven useful this autumn as children struggled to cope with the Sept. 11 tragedy and the ensuing war. Goddy said the response had been "enormous" and "very, very positive."

Moira Megargee, publicist for Interlink Publishing, a small independent publisher based in Northampton, Massachusetts, cited huge demand for a translation of the Koran, the Muslim holy book, as well as historical books about the Middle East.

Even a volume of poetry by Arab women was selling much better than before Sept. 11, Megargee said. "Our books are on display at the chains. We're getting e-mails from friends all over the country, saying, 'Hey, I saw your book.'"

"We're just seeing a greater interest in everything having to do with the Middle East," she said.

Mosques have hosted open houses to help educate their communities, while churches, schools and synagogues have invited Muslims from the community to come and speak there.

Jim Zogby, president of the Arab American Institute, which has also provided information kits sent to teachers by the National Education Association, lauded Bush for his leadership in preventing a greater backlash against Arab and Muslim Americans.

"By near identical margins of 6 to 1, US opinion has a favorable attitude toward Arab Americans and American Muslims," Zogby said.

Moreover, he said, 83 percent of people polled in a recent survey said they were "concerned about the treatment of Arab Americans during this crisis"; with 84 percent similarly "concerned about the treatment of Muslim Americans." ***Reuters***

The Christmas syndrome

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

JUST yesterday morning, I spotted a small plastic bottle on my son's desk. It caught my eye because its bright blue cap was embellished with an orange-and-yellow spiral made from what looked like dried, thickened paint. The rest of the bottle was covered with strips of colored paper, cut out from glossy magazine pages, I gathered, and painstakingly taped on to the bottle.

"Who's this from?" I asked my son, and he mentioned a girl whose name had cropped up from time to time in conversations with his sister. "Can I see what's inside?" I ventured. (Never underestimate the daring—and chutzpah—of the curious mother.) "Sure."

I needed no further invitation to unscrew the lid and inside I found small strips of parchment rolled and tied up with gold string. One was unrolled and it contained an inspirational saying. I was overcome with wonder.

Imagine the time, effort and of course creativity it took to create this gift! Not just to cut the strips of paper, or decorate the colorful bottle, but also to research the sayings, to write them down in clear, delicate penmanship, and put it all together. Indeed, when you're young, artistic and broke, but with plenty of time to spare, you can come up with the most unusual and memorable gifts.

In the days before filofaxes, people made do with either those dinky plastic-covered diaries sold in bookstores or created their own organizers to suit their personal needs. And this is what one young woman did for her boyfriend one Christmas. She took a small pocket-size spiral notebook, unwound the spiral binding, then wrote down and highlighted a day's schedule for each page, broken down into hourly installments. She then put the notebook back together and covered it with colorful wrappers. Truly 365 days' worth of thoughtfulness!

Unfortunately, the relationship didn't last beyond the organizer's lifetime. Which is also one lesson to young women caught in the throes of devotion: While investing time and self on gift projects for significant others is praiseworthy, investing in the relationship itself is even more important. But when the investment doesn't pay off, you should have enough resources left over to create new strategic alliances.

* * *

AROUND this time last year, I was having dinner at the Baguio Country Club when I felt my chest tightening, my heart racing and numbness spreading from my chest to my arms. All the classic symptoms of a heart attack.

"Keep calm," I told myself, forcing myself to breathe slowly, employing Lamaze breathing techniques learned in birthing class. But the symptoms would not disappear, and I began sweating profusely while pressure began to build at the base of my skull.

"Is there a clinic around here?" I asked our host, former La Trinidad Mayor (and now Benguet Vice Governor) Edna Tabanda, who, upon learning about my symptoms not only summoned the Club's nurse, but also called up her sister and brother-in-law, both of them doctors.

I ended up in the emergency room of the St. Louis University hospital where, after an ECG and consultation with a young internist, and much to my embarrassment, I was told I had suffered not a heart attack but a simple case of heartburn. (To enlighten me, the young doctor explained, in a tone normally used for kindergartners: "It usually mimics all the symptoms of a heart attack, that's why it's called heartburn.")

They let me go after telling me to watch what I eat and consult a specialist for the acid reflux that had probably caused the heartburn. Advice which I promptly ignored, of course.

* * *

WELL, guess what? Over the last weekend, it happened again. I was coming from my Saturday radio show and on the way to doing several errands before making our way to the Star Theater for Ballet Manila's "The Nutcracker" that evening. Before we had gotten very far, though, I began to feel the same tightening in my chest, palpitations and a racing pulse. Remembering what the doctor in Baguio had prescribed, I asked the hubby to pass by a drugstore to buy an antacid, which I promptly took.

Before this, I'd been feeling out of sorts. I had a toothache but postponed a visit to the dentist because I'd be doing a lot of talking on the show. But this was also the reason I hadn't been eating much. After the antacid eased my symptoms, we decided to pass by a fast-food place for a late lunch. But when I got down from our CRV, my legs felt like they would turn into jelly. I held on to the back of a chair and when I sat down, I began to tremble uncontrollably and felt an irresistible urge to lie down and sleep.

My husband says he was practically shouting at me and I refused to respond. That's when he decided to rush me to nearby St. Luke's, though he had the presence of mind to hand me a glass of iced tea.

Because I hadn't been eating, my blood sugar level had dropped precipitously, but the iced tea restored me almost immediately. (I'm diabetic and on medication.) The antacid had taken care of the heartburn. So by the time they wheeled me into the ER, I was all right, though I underwent another ECG and yet another lecture from a young doctor about the symptoms and causes of heartburn.

I ran a fever shortly afterwards, though I blame the infected tooth for that (it's been taken cared of, by the way). My own theory is that all those things simply aggravated the fatigue, stress and tension of the holidays. I took a break from deadlines, gift-wrapping and obsessing—jolted by the realization that having the "perfect" celebration isn't worth anything if you aren't healthy enough to enjoy it.

But if it happens again next year, I'm calling it the "Christmas syndrome."

Rediscovering heroes in letters

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

ONCE, while giving my students a guided tour of the crypt in the San Agustin Church, I pointed out the niche where the ashes of Juan Luna were interred. After I gave a short summary of his life and times, someone in the back raised her hand and sheepishly asked, "*Ang ibig ninyong sabihin tutoong tao si* Luna?" This was not a smart aleck grasping for attention, it was someone coming to terms with a hero she had read about in textbooks. Luna was the painter of the "Spoliarium" the painting that launched a million phone cards. Luna was a name, a monument, not a mortal whose ashes were in San Agustin. I cannot remember how I gently answered that question to keep the rest of the class from laughing. That innocent question was not so dumb after all, it has plagued me for years, leading me to many reflections on our perception of heroes.

Filipinos tend to forget that heroes are human. I think this comes from textbooks, holidays, monuments and official commemorations. One of the ways to rediscover heroes is to read their letters and, if possible, to read those written to their respective families which have less patriotic hype. In December 1882, Jose Rizal wrote a long reply to his sister Maria who had sent him a long, newsy letter. Like his other letters, he asked for news from home, he asked that they write more often, he made *bilin*, he wanted homemade guava jelly. In Rizal I could see the homesickness that afflicts many overseas Filipino workers and expatriate Filipinos in our day. When Rizal said he didn't expect his mother and father to write because they are old, you could sense the Filipino sensibility here—he wanted them to write, or at least dictate letters to someone who could write for them.

In a letter to his sister Josefa, he advised his family not to write individually but to gather their letters in one envelope and weigh them. If a package did not weigh more than 15 grams, it did not require more than one postage stamp. "I say this," Rizal added, "because it seems that you are afraid the letter would become heavy." Now, that is being really economical. My greatest surprise was discovering that Rizal was not always the well-dressed gentleman. To his family he could be something else. In his letter to Maria, Rizal he said:

"I thought you were already very tired of angling and boating in the river, fishing day and night. If I were there, then we would still go fishing. Has our river become deeper than it was formerly? When I get home I'll indulge in bathing to the max. You wouldn't believe that since the middle of August [the letter was written Dec. 30] I haven't taken a bath and I haven't perspired either. That is so here. It is very cold and a bath is expensive. One pays thirty-five cents for a bath."

It is unthinkable to even imagine Rizal without a bath for over four months. Was this thrift or a plea for an increase in his allowance? From half the world away, Rizal thinks of home and even his books. In 1883 the lieutenant of the Civil Guard In Calamba borrowed three books from the Rizal library and failed to return them. One of the books, whose title was not mentioned in the letters, was valuable and Rizal wrote in one letter to his family saying:

"Tell me if the book taken away by a military man has been returned already, and if not, what kind of book it was. How nice it is that while I economize in order to buy books, anyone can get away with them. I'm tempted to buy all books in German with certainty that no lieutenant of (the) Civil Guard will understand them, but for your sake I don't do this for you will get no benefit from these books. If German were easy, I would do it, but I believe you would get tired studying it. Most of my books are in French, but I hope that you men and women would be able to translate them in fifteen days; this costs nothing. The books I have here are as many or more than those over there. See to it that none is lost, for...[illegible] that those gentlemen put up a library with involuntary donations."

Christmas is particularly painful for Filipinos living abroad and Rizal was no exception. In a letter to his mother written in Berlin in December 1886, he imagined the grandchildren making noise, greeting *lolo* and *lola* to get their Christmas presents. Like the ordinary Filipino, Rizal also spent a bit more during Christmas even if he did not have much funds to spare. He wrote:

"...You know that since I attained the age of discretion, I have always tried to celebrate this holiday for being the birthday of a great man who was the first to proclaim the equality of men and because this holiday always brings me back many memories of the paternal home. Since I have been in Europe [that is, since 1882] I have celebrated Christmas sometimes in company with countrymen, sometimes alone, and I have not hesitated to spend the little amount of money I have for Christmas."

While Christmas may be a season for panic-buying, calorie counting and much cheer, we shouldn't forget those who are far from home, for whom Christmas with family remains a memory in the heart. Personal letters of heroes remind us that they are more than bronze and stone. Getting to know their humanity makes them more heroic.

* * *

Comments are welcome at ambeth@admu.edu.ph

Bayanihan déjà vu

COMMENTARY

Belinda A. Aquino

HONOLULU—The world-class Bayanihan blew into town end of November for the grand finale of their US tour. It had been 28 years since their last performance in Honolulu in 1973. Many of us didn't get to see the performance then because we were too busy organizing the anti-dictatorship movement not only in Hawaii but across the nation.

The moving spirits behind the 2001 performance were the Pamana Foundation of Hawaii and the Pamana Dancers, both associated with Corky Trinidad and Hana Gomez-Trinidad. Internationally famous Corky is a multi-awarded cartoonist and currently editorial artist of the Honolulu Star-Bulletin. His wife Hana was a performer in the first Bayanihan Company, and founded the Pamana Dancers when she and Corky settled in Honolulu.

Both Corky and Hana were close friends of the late writer Ligaya Victorio Reyes Fruto, pioneering Filipina writer in English and longtime Honolulu resident, who died a few months ago. Part of the Bayanihan proceeds will go to the Center for Philippine Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa to establish an endowment for scholarships in honor of Ligaya, a strong supporter of literature and the arts.

Those attending the Honolulu performance were rewarded by, in the words of Dr. Ricardo Trimillos, "a well-paced seamless production in which dance, music, drama, lighting and costume combined, transformed and recombined throughout the evening." Trimillos, a Filipino-American Ph.D. born in California, is professor of ethnomusicology and current chair of the Asian Studies Program at the University of Hawaii. He is both a musical artist and critic. He has followed the Bayanihan since the early 1960s, including, he adds, the *merienda* performances at the Philippine Women's University. Trimillos worked with Sen. Helena Benitez, who, as president of the PWU, was executive director of the Bayanihan. Trimillos also met and worked with Lucrecia Reyes Urtula and Lucrecia R. Kasilag, directors for choreography and music, respectively, of the Bayanihan.

I shall quote mostly from a recent review of Trimillos, who is the expert on art and culture, titled, "Bayanihan for the 21st Century Premiers in Honolulu" in the local papers. Trimillos calls the performance a mosaic of the old and the new, with the classic Bayanihan's unmistakable stamp of Mmes. Urtula (choreography) and Kasilag (music) mixing with the new, innovative pieces of Ferdinand Jose and Melito Vale Cruz to herald the "second generation" of the Bayanihan's artistic leadership. For instance, the old Mountain Suite's rendition of Cordillera's indigenous people, became "Birds of Bright Plummage." The old Spanish Suite acquired a new name: "Recuerdos de Intramuros." The Muslim Suite with its inevitable "Singkil" became "Mindanao Splendor." And the old familiar "Rural Suite" was renamed "People Under the Sun." All this evoke dramatic and colorful imageries. To add my two cents' worth, I like the last renamed title: People Under the Sun. Sounds certainly dramatic as well as political.

All told, Trimillos notes, these new titles suggest a changed or changing identity of the Bayanihan in the 21st century, "which encourages the national rather than the regional; indeed, the company carries the subtitle 'The Philippine National Folk Dance Company.'" Incidentally, not everyone knows this, but 40 or so top critics internationally rate the Bayanihan third among the best folk dance companies of the world, behind the Polish National Co. and Moisayev Dancers.

Other changes, continues Trimillos, illustrate the close ties between the old and the new. For instance, the sensuous "Paunjalay" was presented and identified as a nuptial dance from the Yakan of the southern Philippines. "As an interesting thread of continuity," according to Trimillos, it references the older choreography "Tahing Baila," a representation of fish. The piece was originally created by Freddy Durano, who taught dance in Hawaii for some years. The old "Maglalatik," another favorite, delighted the audience with its newer and more animated version featuring a great deal of acrobatics and tumbling.

Another major point in Trimillos' critique is that, although some pieces featured individual dancers, the strength of the Company is its ensemble. The absolute precision in the Bukidnon "Dugso," the Cordillera "Pyapos," and the habanera "Senoritas" reflected this ensemble strength in three very different movement styles. Trimillos saw the 1998 Bayanihan performance at the Cultural Center of the Philippines and he thinks that the ensemble was considerably stronger in the 2001 performance in Honolulu than in Manila. Of course, the current Company leadership was relatively new then. "It is also heartening to note a return to the more authentic costuming," he adds, "especially in the tribal and Muslim pieces, which have renewed consultation with tradition bearers, a practice to be encouraged."

Trimillos adds a human interest dimension in his review with a retelling of an anecdote involving Dr. Kasilag and the late impresario Sol Hurok, who had demanded major changes in the choreography before the Company's first world tour. Understandably, the "King" objected to the changes, whereupon the irrepressible Hurok bellowed, "You do want this group to be successful, don't you!?"

Unfazed by the explosive Hurok, Dr. Kasilag shot back, "The first thing this group will be is Filipino, then it can be successful!"

With its Honolulu performance, Trimillos concludes, the Bayanihan once more showed the "style, charisma and energy" that have captivated international audiences in Brussels, New York and Madrid. "It further affirmed its capacity to change and grow, establishing a national dance theater tradition for the Philippines."

After the performance, the Filipino community in Hawaii expressed the hope that it will not take another three decades before the Bayanihan comes back to town. Otherwise, no one will be around anymore. The Philippine Consulate in Honolulu, which co-sponsored the event, should make strong representations with the Philippine government to bring it back every four to five years, and major local Filipino organizations could be given funding responsibilities.

Belinda A. Aquino is professor of Political Science and Asian Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa where she is also director of the Center for Philippine Studies.

THEY SAID

Stress of action agenda

"In an action agenda, you stress what you are going to do, not what the national government needs to do. Otherwise, the national government should have joined your workshop."

—President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, criticizing the mayors' so-called "action agenda"

Penalty taken

"There are only so many waking hours and if I have not been able to comply with all of them as things would require, well it is a shortcoming and there is a penalty that deserves to be imposed and that penalty shall be taken."

—Justice Francis Garchitorena on the Supreme Court's resolution relieving him of his duties as head of the Sandiganbayan

Apt ass hauler

"Cars are great for going long distances. But it makes no sense at all for people in cities to use 4,000-pound pieces of metal to haul their 150-lb asses around town."

—Dean Kamen, inventor of motorized the scooter-like vehicle, "Ginger"

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Fantastic statistic

ACCORDING to an article in your paper last Dec. 14, one out of 4 Filipinas have had an abortion. If there are about 80 million Filipinos, about 40 million would be women. That would mean that about 10 million Filipinas already had an abortion! Is the Population Commission serious? Can anybody believe this fantastic statistic?

The article mentioned a national population survey conducted last year. Does anyone remember answering this survey? Does any Filipina remember answering a question of whether she ever had an abortion? If you did have an abortion in the past and were asked this question in a survey, would you readily admit it? Maybe this fantastic "statistic" came from records of hospitals and illegal abortion clinics. But how was the Popcom able to get an accurate data from clandestine abortion clinics?

The Filipino public is constantly being fed fantastic statistics such as this to change public sentiment into accepting the legalization of abortion. But let me ask: If it is true that so many women and babies die because of abortion and pregnancy-related complications, should we not work harder to bring good medical attention to women so they can have healthy pregnancies and babies? Should we not concentrate our efforts in economically uplifting the poor so they can give all their children a life of dignity? Shouldn't government agencies like the Popcom stop wasting taxpayers' money on false surveys and advocacy for death to unborn babies? Why should abortion be the solution? Will killing babies in the womb make women healthier and happier? All I know for sure is that abortion is never the better choice for its unborn victims.

The Popcom should stop insulting our intelligence with its fantastic statistics and the INQUIRER should stop publishing them.—**GIGI PADILLA, 9 Apo St., Quezon City**

Regrets voting for Serge Osmeña III

SEN. Sergio Osmena III used to be a level-headed, fair and relatively low-key and decent politician with a knack for hard work. This is seen in his performance in the Senate where he authored and spearheaded major legislative bills particularly in the areas of agriculture, trade and industry, energy and other economic reform legislation. However, when he found himself in the company of pro-Estrada senators in the Senate minority after the last May 2001 elections, he seems to have lost his political bearing and his political sanity, in a manner of speaking.

First, he tried a filibustering act on the Senate floor and in the process made a fool of himself. Adverse public reaction forced him to stop his filibuster. Now, he seems to be styling himself as some sort of a "Mr. Exposé II" with his revelations on alleged ransom payments. All I can say is that the timing is so way off. As a responsible public official, he should have divulged all of these at the height of the House and Senate investigations on the matter a few months ago. Also, where was he when there was widespread talk about ransom payments in the millions of dollars for the release of the Sipadan hostages during the Estrada administration?

It is clear that this is part of the political opposition's agenda to keep this administration off-balance. The nation is tired of these political games. Filipinos deserve a better future, better lives and a better nation. Whatever happened to Sen. Sergio Osmeña III? I have since regretted voting for him in 1995 and 2001 as well as in 1998 when he ran for vice president.—**FERDIE T. SIBAL, 18 Green Leaves St., Capitol Green Village, Tandang Sora, Quezon City**

LETTERS

Gabriela did not know of rape case

THIS is in response to a letter sent by a certain T.A. Cruz. (PDI, 12/14/01) who was questioning Gabriela's absence during the promulgation of a rape case filed against a Catholic priest.

Firstly, we are not aware of the case mentioned in the letter. No such case was brought to our attention and we do not recall the victim or her family seeking Gabriela's assistance, whether through our legal network or our counseling or health services. We always volunteer our support and we attend and even picket the hearings of rape and abuse cases as an expression of support only when the victim or her family feels it is necessary.

Gabriela, through the years, has supported many women and children victims of violence especially those abused by people in power. We do not discriminate against any religion as Cruz implied.

The letter made no mention of the exact date, branch number or name of the accused. If Cruz's letter was meant to call our attention to the case, then we respond with our readiness to assist the victim and her family and work with concerned groups and individuals for the upliftment of the rights and welfare of women and children.—**EMMIE DE JESUS, deputy secretary general, Gabriela, 35 Scout Delagdo St., Barangay Laging Handa, Quezon City**

Tragedies in health care services

SINCE the Dec. 3, 2001 letter to the editor titled, "Rudeness and cruelty in the delivery room," the INQUIRER has published Rina Jimenez-David's column (PDI, 12/4/01) telling how common such terrible experiences of "charity" cases are. Dr. Anthony R.T. Golez, Jr. wrote (PDI, 12/7/01) from Bacolod affirming the horror stories in government hospital delivery rooms that likely mirrored the same problem in almost all government hospitals.

Such experiences are why many pregnant women avoid seeking prenatal care or delivery in government hospitals. Why should they suffer being cursed, put in unsanitary and overcrowded wards where they hear the screams of other women who are being sutured without anesthesia, who are terrified because the staff are so overworked they cannot explain to them what is happening and ease some of their stress and pain, who at times see women bleeding to death without proper medical intervention?

Less than a month ago in a hospital in Quezon province, two women were brought to the emergency room with complications. One had a baby partially delivered—only the head—because her pelvis was too small to accommodate the size of the baby. The other was having eclamptic convulsions. Both patients had to be sent to a hospital about an hour away because the hospitals they reached were not adequately equipped with anesthesia and other basic medicines. The baby of the first mother was already dead when she was sent away for a one hour jeepney ride. It is likely that the mother died, too. The second mother suffered a paralyzing stroke. Neither woman had prenatal care which could have prevented their tragedies. Why would they seek prenatal care if they had no money to pay for the hospital service and buy the needed medicines? Why would they come, only to be told they needed to undergo caesarian operation to deliver their babies, when they didn't have enough money to even manage their day to day expenses?

Since 1993, when the Department of Health and our legislators agreed to give responsibility to the local government units for the health services of the people, and in 1999 when the DOH and then President Estrada pushed through the questionable Executive Order No. 102, the government has steadily reduced its budget for health care and has relentlessly proceeded with corporatizing its major hospitals. The bottom line of the plan is to reduce government spending for citizens' health services. The unquestionable result is that Filipino people are being killed by these moves—killed because they cannot afford essential health services.

How insulting to label the majority of citizens as "indigent" or "charity cases" and thus deprive them of essential health services when, in fact, they are 8 out of 10 Filipinos whose income levels cannot pay for the health care they need. If truth were to be told, many of these so-called indigent patients have worked harder than the professionals who deny them their basic rights.

We in the Network Opposed to Privatization (NO to Privatization) call on all Filipinos to demand a stop to the new killing fields—the underbudgeted health facilities, the uncontrolled prices of medicines and the overextended and underpaid government health workers—which are causing the increase in the number of preventable sickness or death of our struggling people.

Let us do what we must. Stop corporatization and privatization of health care, both of which are depriving people of needed health services. Let's refuse to pay the interest of our foreign debt and instead, reduce the military budget. Let's prosecute government officials who continue to bleed the citizens dry of resource and money due to graft and corruption. All of these are killing us.—**SR. MARY GRENOUGH, MM, convenor, Network Opposed to Privatization, 233 Mayon St., Quezon City**

Going back to baskets and 'bayongs'

THIS is to congratulate Joy Lim-Abbu for her letter, "Simple ways of recycling plastic products." (PDI, 11/13/01) How I wish it had a more prominent place in your newspaper.

The garbage problem is really a very serious one, especially here in Metro Manila. The use of plastic products is the root cause of this problem. I am truly happy for the suggestions of Abbu. Plastic bags must not be given free. In this way people will go to market with the baskets or *"bayongs"* like in the good old days. Then the basket-making industry will be revived. Rice sacks will be made into *"bayongs"* and cement bags into *"supot."* This will be a source of income for the poor.

Market vendors will lessen their expenses by not providing free plastic bags to their customers.

Little things like this will help much in our economic life if our government officials, including President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo are really intent on solving the garbage problem and in helping our poor people. –**SR. ESPERANZA FADERA, SPC, St. Paul College of Manila, Pedro Gil Community, P.O. Box 3062, Manila 1070**

Pagcor should support existing hospitals

PHILIPPINE Amusement and Gaming Corp. Chair Efraim Genuino's plan to set up a clinic in every church and every place of worship, starting with those in Metro Manila and eventually spreading across the country, is noteworthy but requires not just a little more study and consultation with people who know where our health care system is weak and where Pagcor's support can do the most good for the poorest of our patients in the entire country. Let me give you the reasons.

First, a clinic in every church would mean putting up an adjacent structure for its program. If you have a structure, then you will need people to run it. You need to mobilize volunteer doctors, nurses and other health and social workers to make sure that the project will be adequately staffed and run well. The clinic will need basic furniture and basic clinic supplies and apparatus.

There are 270 churches in the 15 cities and municipalities under the Archdiocese of Manila's jurisdiction alone, not including the other churches of the different religious groups. Putting up a center in every church will just duplicate the purpose of barangay health centers. Why doesn't Pagcor strengthen these instead? Pagcor funds will double the numbers now served and maximize the benefits extended by these existing but underfunded centers.

Second, I think Metro Manila should not be the focus of an endeavor such as this. I can easily name 15 hospitals and more in Metro Manila that have their own outpatient department catering to the poor.

In Negros Occidental, for instance, there are almost 3 million people with only 17 hospitals, mostly only primary. There are only a total of 1,700 hospital beds, leaving a patient-hospital bed ratio of 1,700 to 1. In Bacolod City, there are five tertiary hospitals, but only the Corazon L. Montelibano Memorial Regional Hospital is a tertiary government hospital. It is a 350-bed hospital that almost always exceeds its capacity more than double daily. Just last year, it serviced more than 200,000 very poor patients. It has less than 80 regular doctors and has a nurse to patient ratio of 1 is to 40 (ideal is 1:4). The figure just goes to show that our barangay health centers are poorly supported, if not, often neglected.

Many who have felt and witnessed our substandard health care system have put different non-stock and non-profit foundations to help alleviate the sufferings of many. These organizations did not wait anymore and have been trying to help the government absorb many of its health care problems for a long period already. They have existing projects that have already benefited thousands of our poor patients. These, I think, should be the priority of Pagcor. Before the energy of the government's partners in service die down, recharge them through greater support like what the project of Pagcor aims to do.—**ANTHONY ROLANDO T. GOLEZ JR., M.D., director, Lingkod-e.r. Foundation, Bulig Kabuhi (Bulig Ka!) Foundation**

The required 13th month pay

I WAS surprised to hear that some institutions had thought of doing away with the mandated 13th month pay since it is a privilege granted employees by law. The extra income is what many use to meet some of the financial obligations brought about by the holiday season. Unfortunately, by all indications, many employees will have to do without the much-needed extra income. The growing economic problems plaguing the country seems to be the primary culprit behind the inability of a number of companies to shell out the 13th month pay.

The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) is attempting to remedy the situation. It has asked aggrieved parties to report any of their employer's actions on this matter. Although I commend the TUCP, this is not enough. The problem isn't merely the inability to produce the 13th month pay, but the prevailing attitude of many Filipinos who adhere to the *"kung makakalusot, lulusot"* mentality. Its evident in the way Filipinos blatantly ignore our existing traffic laws or in the way money is used to facilitate different government transactions.

Collectively, we, as a people, must do something about it. We cannot allow ourselves to fall prey to such a destructive attitude. This outlook seems to be one of the major reasons we are unable to prosper. I have to admit that I cannot give a concrete plan to combat this mentality. All I can do is to voice out what I see and hopefully touch a few people along the way.—**NOELLE TATAD, 72 Malumanay St., Teachers' Village, Quezon City**

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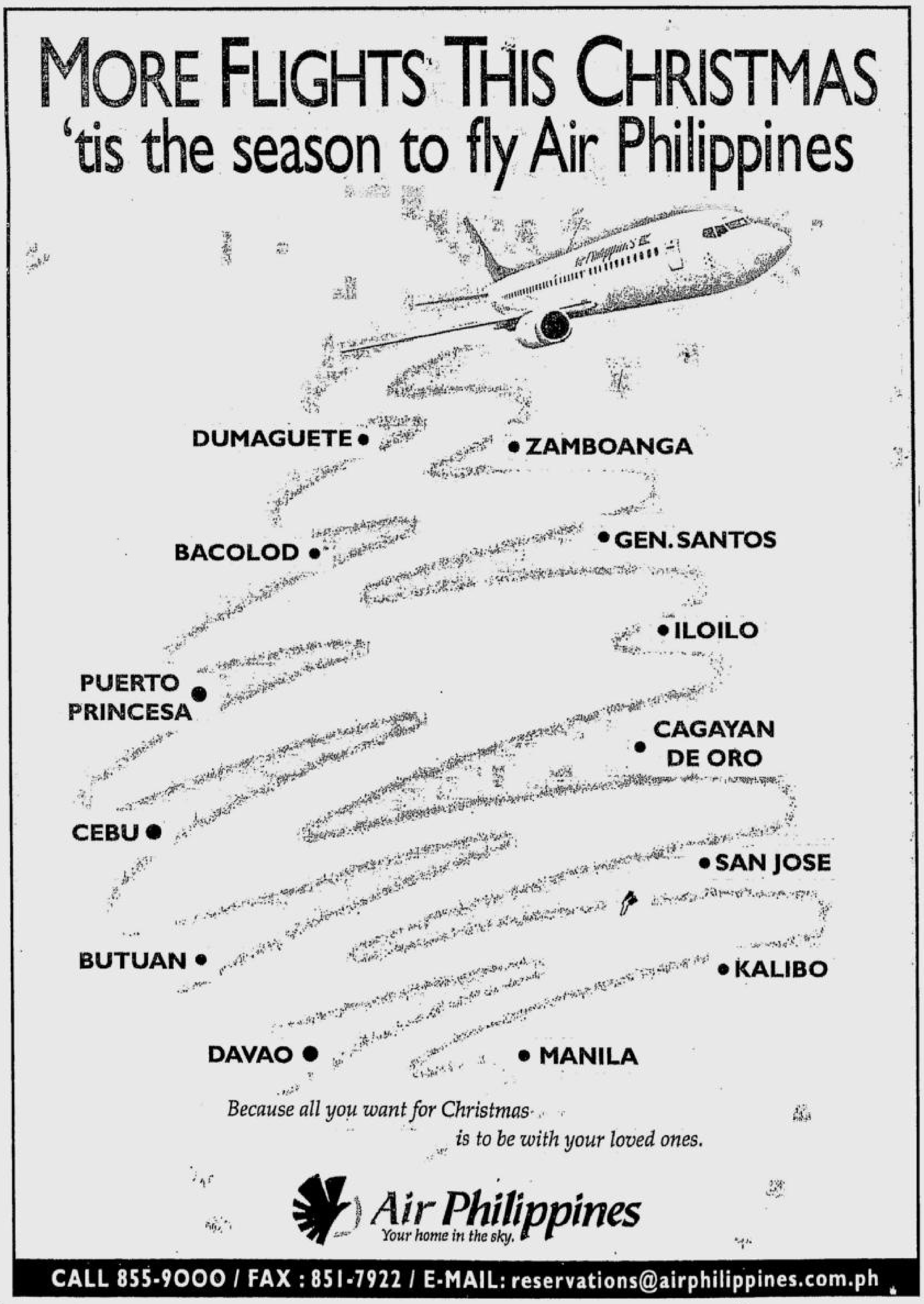
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The WORLD

LUVERNE B. GUECO, EDITOR

Bin Laden location still a mystery

AN ANTI-TALIBAN Afghan fighter, his tent secured to a live shell, cleans his teeth as he relaxes after battling al-Qaida members in Tora Bora Dec. 17. Dozens of al-Qaida soldiers were captured after days of gunbattles with anti-Taliban fighters in the Tora Bora mountains.

REUTERS

TORA BORA, Afghanistan/WASHINGTON—The whereabouts of Osama bin Laden, the world's most wanted man, remained a mystery on Tuesday as US and Afghan forces hunted his routed fighters in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell said the United States did not know whether the Saudi-born millionaire it blames for the Sept. 11 suicide attacks was still in Afghanistan—or even if he was alive or dead.

With US forces keen to nab Bin Laden and close phase one of Washington's war on terrorism, Afghans looked ahead to Saturday's installation of an interim government to steer a country at war for over two decades toward a more peaceful future.

After weeks of sustained US bombing, Afghan and US ground forces flushed Bin Laden's al-Qaida fighters out of their last bastion in the Tora Bora mountains—a warren of tunnels and caves—near Pakistan's porous border on Sunday.

Triumphant Afghan commanders paraded 19 shuffling and shell-shocked captive al-Qaida fighters in a ritual humiliation on Monday in the village of Mia, some 15 km north of the front line.

But there was no sign of Bin Laden, whose Taliban protectors were earlier ousted by a loose and disparate coalition of US-backed Afghan tribal fighters.

"He might still be in Afghanistan. He might have gotten out of the country. He might be dead for all we know. We don't have any fresh information," Powell told a US television chat show.

US officials said hundreds of Bin Laden loyalists were on the run near the border with Pakistan where there have been unconfirmed reports that the Saudi-born militant may have slipped past Pakistani border patrols.

An ABC News report said US special forces were inside Pakistan to coordinate the hunt for fleeing al-Qaida fighters, while CIA agents were at Pakistan detention centers interrogating nearly 100 fugitives who have already been arrested.

Pentagon spokesperson Rear Admiral John Stufflebeem said looking for the al-Qaida fighters was like searching for fleas on a dog.

"If you see one and you focus on the one, you don't know how many others are getting away," he said.

US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, arriving in Brussels for a Nato meeting, said al-Qaida remained a threat in Afghanistan. "The fact of the matter is . . . there are still any number of al-Qaida in that country," he added.

While Bin Laden's whereabouts were a mystery, Pashtun forces were preparing to attack a mountain redoubt where Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar, long-time protector of Bin Laden, was believed to be hiding with 500 men.

Kandahar director of intelligence Haji Gullalai said Omar was hiding in mountains and caves around the village of Baghran in Helmand Province, about 160 km from southern Kandahar. *Reuters*

New anthrax scare hits US; bacteria appears homegrown

WASHINGTON—Worries over anthrax lingered in the United States after a new suspicious letter was found at the state department, decontamination in the Senate stalled and the White House said the bacteria appears to have come from a domestic source.

A letter containing an unidentified, but suspicious white powder was delivered Monday to the state department addressed to Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage. When an aide opened it, powder spilled out, department spokesperson Richard Boucher said.

Boucher said since the letter was sent through the US postal system, "we assume that it was irradiated and therefore poses no immediate health threat."

Most US mail and all of it coming to federal office buildings is now irradiated after at least two anthrax-tainted letters were mailed to Congress. Bacteria from those letters is believed to have infected postal workers and mail handlers.

Meanwhile, attempts to clean up the anthrax in a US Senate office building were stalled by mechanical problems.

Capitol Police spokesperson Dan Nichols said experts from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), who are trying to sanitize the building by pumping chlorine dioxide gas into it, will try to fix the problem as fast as they can.

"We want to make the building safe," he assured.

The building has been closed since Oct. 17, after a letter laced with the potentially fatal anthrax spores was opened by an aide to Sen. Tom Daschle.

The White House Monday said that the anthrax sent to leading media outlets and political figures appears to have come from a domestic source.

Spokesperson Air Fleischer said that although officials have yet to reach a final conclusion, "the evidence is increasingly looking like it was a domestic source."

But, he cautions, "there's a big difference between the source of it and who sent it, because the two do not have to be tied."

Later, President George W. Bush said the US government was "still looking" at where the potentially deadly bacteria—which left five people dead and infected 13 more—originated.

"We've all got different feelings about it, and we're gathering as much information. As soon as we make definitive conclusions, we'll share it with the American people," he said. *AFP*

UK to send up to 1,500 soldiers to Afghanistan

LONDON—Prime Minister Tony Blair said Monday Britain would contribute up to 1,500 British troops for a multinational force to monitor peace in Afghanistan and that the first soldiers could be in place by the weekend.

"The British contingent is likely to be up to 1,000 to 1,500, though I stress that this is not yet decided," Blair told parliament.

Under the power-sharing accord signed by Afghan factions on Dec. 5 in the German city of Bonn, a UN-mandated international force is to be deployed to help police the Afghan capital Kabul.

The agreement allows for the force's mandate to be extended later to other towns and cities.

The prime minister said there may be some lead elements of the security force in Kabul by the time the interim government assumed power on Saturday.

He spoke of the "urgent need to ensure that as the war is being won, we play our part in securing the peace."

"There has been a brilliant victory over Taliban, but we know that is only the start of enabling Afghanistan to cease being a failed state," he added.

Blair also said the troops would be deployed on the basis of chapter 7 of the UN charter, which allows the use of force.

The interim Afghan's government's foreign minister Abdullah Abdullah has called for the force to be deployed under chapter 6 of the UN charter, which does not explicitly allow force.

The Northern Alliance, which toppled the Taliban regime last month with the decisive help of US air strikes, has sought to limit the size of the force.

Afghan defense minister Gen. Mohammed Fahim told the UN's top envoy for Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi, last week that he wanted a maximum of 1,000 soldiers just to protect the new government.

But Western leaders have pressed for a much larger force, for humanitarian and security reasons.

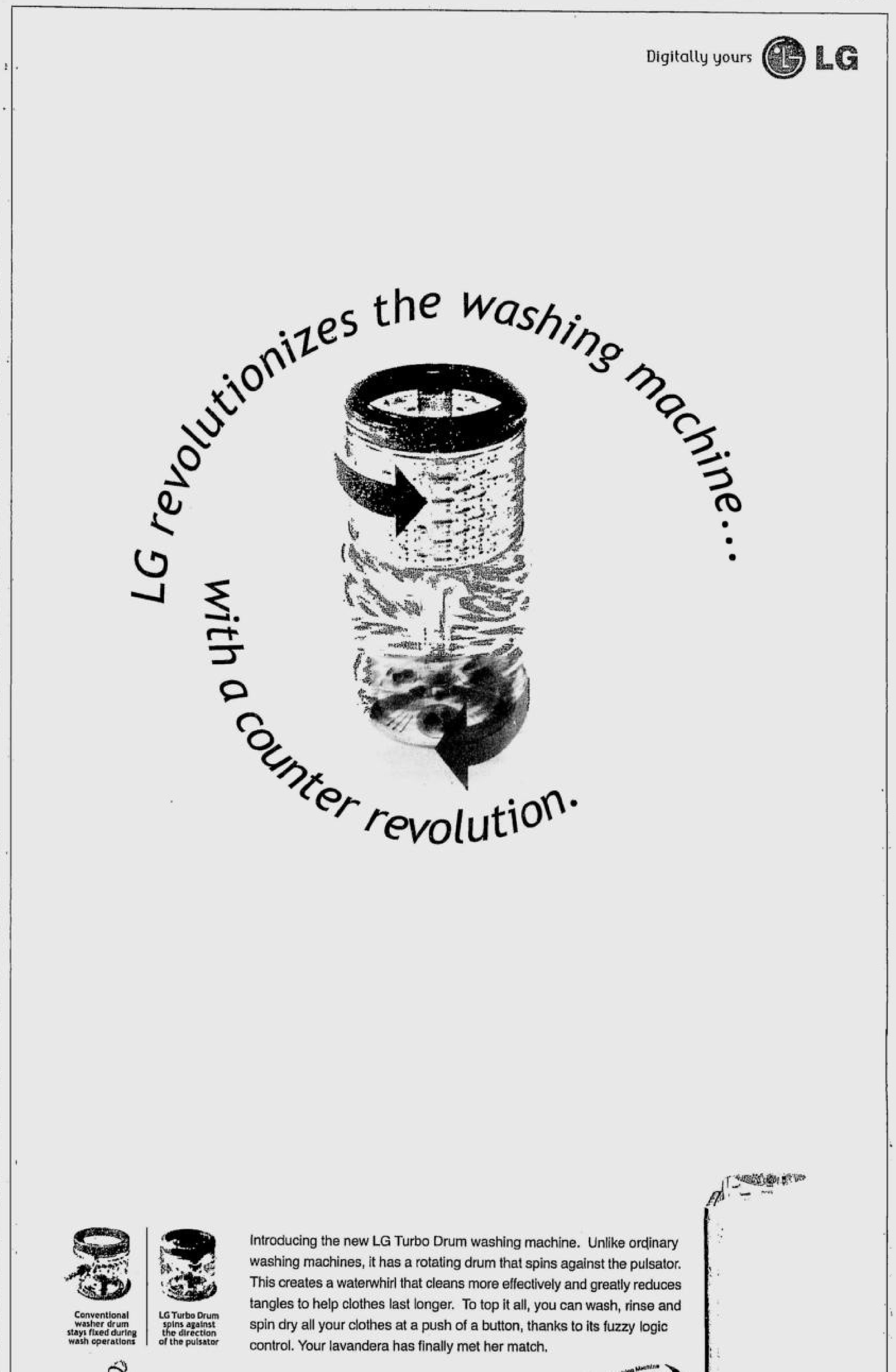
Blair said no time limit had been placed on the mission but people were talking in terms of several months.

The prime minister reiterated Britain's willingness to play the lead role in the multinational contingent.

"The fact is we are the nation best placed to give that leadership, which is why we have been asked to do it," Blair added.

He said that other European and non-European countries would contribute, including those represented at a London meeting on the subject last Friday.

Those countries were: Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Turkey and the United States. *AFP*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US moves to prevent India-Pakistan war

WASHINGTON—The United States urged India and Pakistan to tone down their rhetoric Monday, after last week's attack on the Indian parliament boosted tension between the nuclear rivals US officials fear "could spiral out of control."

Secretary of State Colin Powell said the two south Asian nuclear rivals needed to weigh carefully any steps they take to deal with the Dec. 13 suicide assault, which India blames on Pakistan-based Islamic militants.

"We are concerned," Powell said. "We would not wish to see this escalate to a direct exchange between the two nations going after each other, as opposed to going after a common enemy, which is terrorist organizations that conduct these kinds of horrible, horrible attacks."

He urged India to share information about its investigation into the attack with Pakistan so that both countries could be on the same side.

And, while he noted that both were "acting responsibly" thus far, Powell said he hoped the situation would not turn "critical."

"I hope the degree of calmness that we have seen and degree of patience that we have seen sustains for quite a bit longer so that the situation doesn't become critical," Powell said on PBS television's "NewsHour with Jim Lehrer."

Earlier, spokespersons for the White House and State Department urged the two countries to proceed carefully, telling India to back off on accusations of who was responsible for the attack until an investigation is complete and advising Pakistan it needed to move against extremists.

"India has a legitimate right to self-defense," White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer said, noting President George W. Bush's concerns about actions taken by either side that could prove precipitous.

"At the same time, the president counsels that this is a very difficult situation in the region, and one that could spiral out of control," he said.

Bush "urges that both sides share information, work with each other and take no action that would in any way hinder the war against terrorism, to which both India and Pakistan have committed themselves."

At the state department, spokesperson Richard Boucher said Washington was in close touch with both capitals, advising restraint.

Boucher made clear that Indian threats and predictions of a response against Pakistan before New Delhi's investigation into the attack was complete were not helpful.

"I realize there have been some comments by the Indian authorities about these attacks, but formally we understand they are continuing their investigation into these brutal attacks," Boucher said.

"We're looking to India to finish its investigation," he told reporters at least twice, adding that only then would it be right for Indian officials to "consider what action might be appropriate." *AFP*

Israel kills 3 Palestinians; Hamas defiant

JERUSALEM—Israeli troops shot dead three Palestinians on Monday, including a Hamas member and a 12-year-old boy, drawing vows from militant groups to defy Yasser Arafat's demand for a halt to armed attacks on Israelis.

Israel and the United States demanded action, not words, from Arafat, whose job clamping down on militants appeared to get harder as Hamas and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) vowed to continue attacks against Israel.

In Washington, White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer said that US President George W. Bush would judge the Palestinian leader based on whether his "words turn into concrete acts."

"Action has now to be taken. We have to see action," US Secretary of State Colin Powell told reporters.

In rare criticism of Israel, the United States called the brief detention of the Palestine Liberation Organization's top official for Jerusalem affairs by Israeli police "provocative and counterproductive" and said it had lodged a complaint.

ARAFAT

In his first comments since Arafat's speech to the Palestinian people on Sunday night, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said: "We are fed up with all these declarations, promises. Words have nothing to do here—only deeds."

Hamas, which has spearhead a suicide bombing campaign against Israel, issued a statement saying it would not heed Arafat's call to end attacks against the Jewish state which it said was "an unjust formula that can't be accepted."

The PFLP's military wing said it would continue "armed resistance." "Operations will continue as long as the occupation exists," the group said in a separate statement.

Arafat, pressured by Israel and the United States to crack down on militants after a wave of suicide bombings, has outlawed the military wings of Hamas, the PFLP and other militant groups.

"I am completely committed to what I have declared, but I am sorry to say that still the Israelis are escalating their military (actions)," Arafat told reporters in the West Bank city of Ramallah on Monday.

"As an example, this morning they assassinated a citizen in Hebron and (there is) the same escalation in many other places," he said, urging Sharon "to come back to the peace process."

Palestinian security sources said Israeli special forces in the West Bank city of Hebron shot dead Yakoub Idkadak, a Hamas activist, as he tried to escape arrest outside his home. The Army accused him of alleged "terrorist activity." *Reuters*

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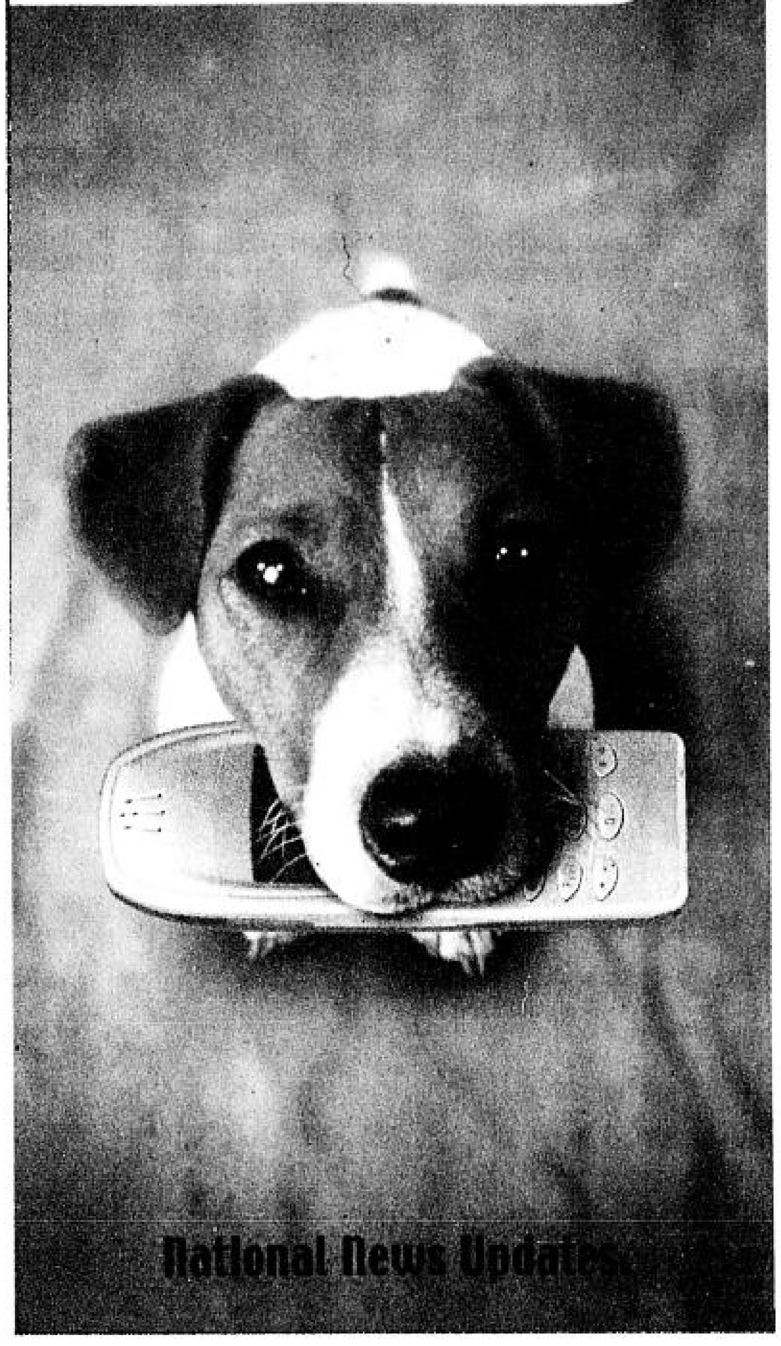

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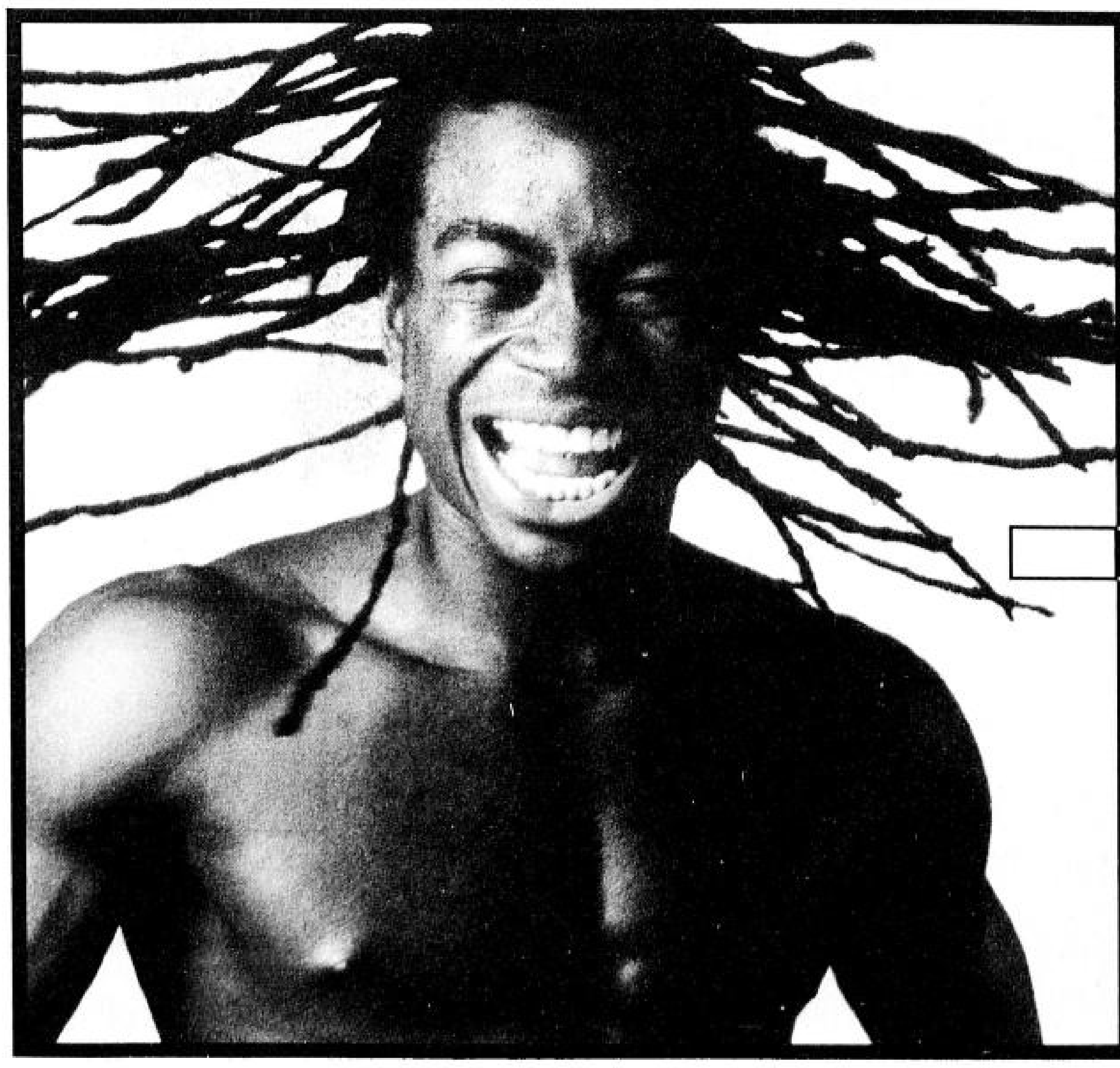

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Haiti forces foil coup bid against Aristide

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti—Gunmen stormed the National Palace in Haiti before dawn on Monday in an apparent coup attempt against President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, raising fears of a return to the Caribbean nation's bloody past as dissatisfaction with his government grows.

Security forces foiled the bid after a shootout with the attackers, officials said. Seven people, including a gunman and two police officers, were killed in the incident.

Later, thousands of Haitians loyal to the populist Aristide, some armed with guns and machetes, took to the streets, burning tires and crying for vengeance against the attackers.

Aristide, a former Roman Catholic priest who is Haiti's first democratically elected president, and his family were asleep at their private home a few miles away at the time of the attack, palace sources said.

The President went to the palace hours after the assault and in a speech broadcast to the nation asked Haitians to be vigilant in the face of the attempted coup.

"It is time to be patriots; the nation is in danger," Aristide said. "I thank the population and the police for defending democracy."

Recalling the violent 1991 army coup that interrupted his first term in office and resulted in the deaths of thousands of people, Aristide called on Haitians to mobilize peacefully and respect the rights of all political parties.

"Haitians will never go into hiding again," he said. "The period of the coup d'etat is over."

Haitian National Police spokesperson Jean Dady Simeon said an estimated 30 armed gunmen stormed the palace before dawn. The attackers were dressed in military uniforms, Chief of Palace Security Oriel Jean Baptiste said.

There was no official word on the affiliation of the gunmen, but suspicion fell on members of the disbanded army.

"One of the attackers is dead; some are in custody and some have fled," Jean Baptiste said.

A crowd torched the offices of the main opposition political coalition, the Democratic Convergence, and the headquarters of two of its parties, KONAKOM and ALLA, witnesses and radio reports said.

"Turn them (the gunmen) over to us! We know what to do with them!" screamed a young man holding on to the palace gate.

Unrest flared in the southern cities of Jacmel and Petit Goave in protest against the coup bid, radio reports said.

Local radio stations identified the gunmen as former soldiers. The Army, which ruled Haiti in brutal fashion for several years in the 1980s and 1990s, was disbanded after a US intervention in 1994 that restored Aristide to power following his ouster in the 1991 coup.

Monday's attack took place against a background of growing unrest in the impoverished country of 8 million people, which has a history of political violence but has been relatively stable under Aristide's rule. *Reuters*

FIRE VICTIMS

REUTERS

Mgr. Gerardo Pierro, Bishop of Salerno, blesses the coffins of the 19 victims who died after a fire tore through a home for the elderly and mentally infirm in San Gregorio Magno, southern Italy Dec. 17. The blaze occurred early on Sunday, killing 19 people, many as they slept, and injuring nearly a dozen, police said.

Rights group says Nigeria failed to avert mass slays

LAGOS—An international human rights group said on Monday that Nigerian authorities could have prevented mass killings during religious clashes in the central city of Jos in September but failed to act on warning signal0s.

New York-based Human Rights Watch said in a report, a summary of which was provided to Reuters, that as many as 1,000 people may have died in just three days at the height of fighting between Muslims and Christians in the city.

The regional state government put the death toll in scores and the number of wounded in hundreds. Nigerian authorities have routinely played down casualty figures from religious and ethnic clashes in an effort to avoid triggering reprisal killings.

The 25-page report, titled "Jos: City Torn Apart," was based on eyewitness testimonies gathered during a visit to Jos in October 2001, Human Rights Watch said.

Christians and Muslims were both perpetrators and victims of the Sept. 7-13 mayhem, in which homes and businesses in the normally peaceful city were smashed or set ablaze.

"Government authorities and security forces failed to take action that could have saved hundreds of lives," Human Rights Watch said.

"The Nigerian government can't just sit back and watch this happen," Peter Takirambudde, executive director of the Africa Division of Human Rights Watch, said in the report. "It has a responsibility to maintain peace. There were clear signals that trouble was brewing in Jos but these signals were ignored."

President Olusegun Obasanjo ordered the Army to restore order after police were overwhelmed by the spreading riots.

Takirambudde said effective government action was urgently needed if violence in Jos, and in hot spots across the country, was not to flare up again and cause thousands of more deaths.

Obasanjo is struggling with the worst cycle of ethnic and religious violence in the country for 30 years. Well over 3,000 people have died in all corners of Africa's most populous nation of over 110 million since military rule ended in 1999.

The predominantly Muslim north has been in turmoil in the past two years over the introduction in some states of Islamic sharia law, which is opposed by non-Muslims.

The Human Rights Watch report described the background to the Jos clashes, highlighting what it said were clear warning signs of growing tension in the weeks before the violence.

Several non-governmental organizations directly approached the state government, police and military authorities to warn them of the impending dangers, it said.

"Explicit threats by both Muslim and Christian groups were not taken seriously by the government," said Takirambudde.

"Their warnings were effectively ignored." *Reuters*

China tightens security after 'grudge' blasts

BEIJING—China on Tuesday tightened security in Beijing following a series of suspected grudge bombings across the country, as reports said the bomber of a McDonald's restaurant in a major tourist city most likely remained at large.

Barricades were installed outside the US Embassy complex in central Beijing, with vehicle, bicycle and even foot traffic redirected.

Police in the capital were not available for comment on whether the beefed up security was related to the McDonald's bombing or others in a series of around 24 explosions set off in four cities in just three days.

The McDonald's bomb exploded early Saturday evening as the fast-food restaurant in Xian was packed with customers, killing two people and injuring 27 others, state media said.

Xian, capital of northern China's Shaanxi province, is the base for huge numbers of foreign tourists visiting its nearby 2,000-year-old army of terracotta warriors.

One man was killed instantly and another man died from his injuries later Saturday, reports said.

Local media initially said the blast was a suicide bombing and that the perpetrator died instantly. However, reports Tuesday said police had found a detonator and a timer at the scene, which indicated the perpetrator was elsewhere when the bomb exploded.

"This rules out the possibility of previous analysis by media that the person who was killed (instantly) was the perpetrator," Xian Television's website said.

A local journalist said Monday police did not believe either dead men were to blame, and that they were only customers. *AFP*

Illegal migrants torch Australia detention center

SYDNEY, Australia—Rioting asylum seekers set fire to some 15 buildings in a remote detention camp overnight, the government said Tuesday.

The incident, at the Woomera detention center in South Australia state, is the latest and worst in a series of riots, demonstrations and escapes that have plagued the camps in the past two years.

Almost 3,000 men, women and children are kept behind barbed wire in five such camps across Australia, while authorities review their applications for asylum. Some like Woomera are in remote locations.

Most of the inmates have fled humanitarian catastrophes in the Middle East and South and Central Asia, coming to Australia from Indonesia on boats organized by people-smuggling gangs.

Their applications for asylum are usually processed within months, but some, including children, have languished in the camps for more than three years.

Attorney General Daryl Williams, speaking as acting immigration minister, said the incident began as a peaceful demonstration involving women and children.

"It ended with something like 15 buildings being set alight, and four of them were destroyed," Williams said.

Williams said the demonstrators had been chanting "visa, visa, visa," but were mistaken if they thought setting buildings alight would help their applications for refugee status.

The practice of imprisoning asylum seekers and the existence of the camps themselves have been condemned by international and Australian human rights groups and churches as well as parliamentary reports. *AP*

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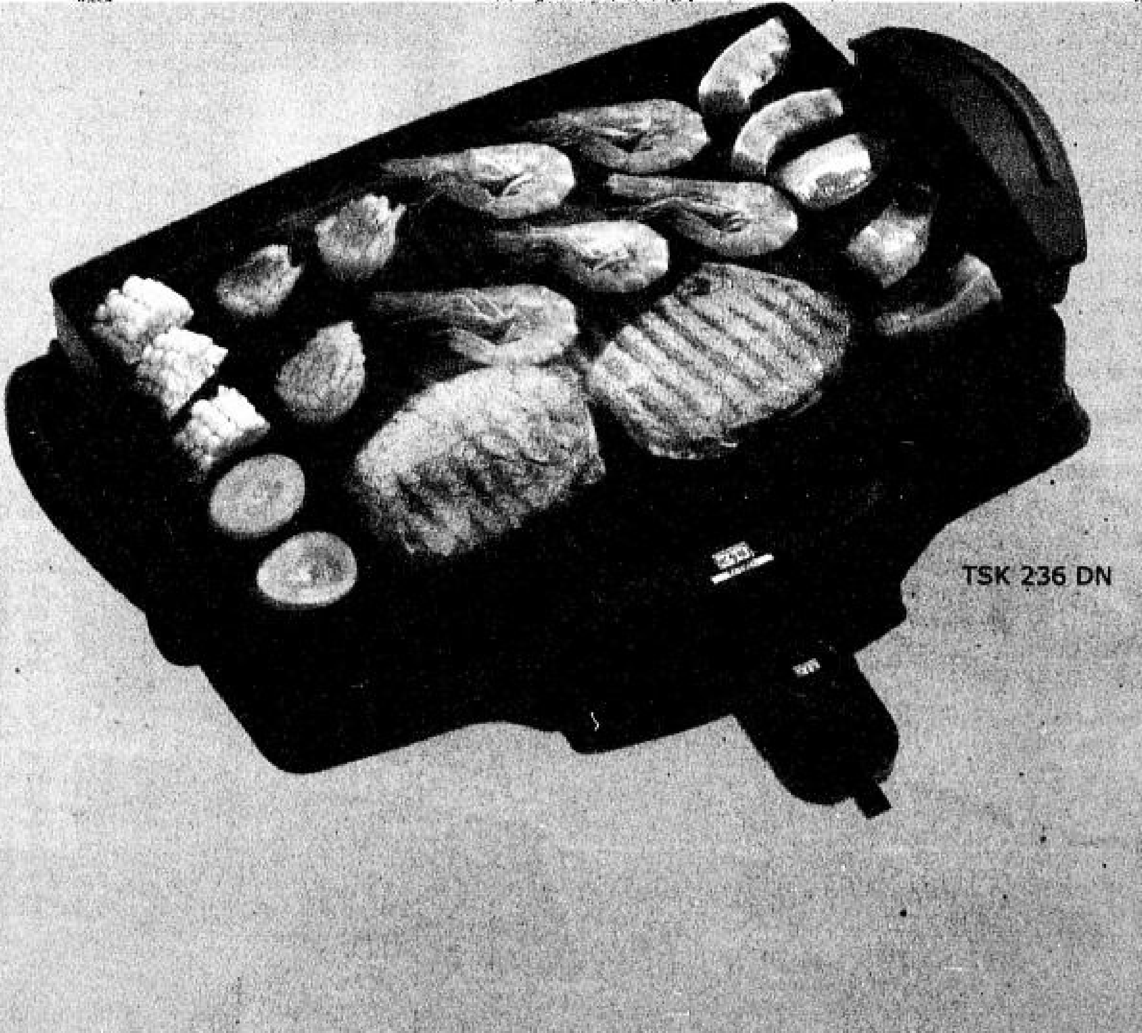

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₱5 wage hike approved in C. Visayas

BY JHUNNEX NAPALLACAN
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—"It felt like we were just given a piece of lollipop."

This was how Cebuano labor leader Marianito Ventura described the P5-increase in daily wage that was granted yesterday for Central Visayas private sector workers by the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board (RTWPB).

The P5-wage hike could be considered a triumph for the labor sector since the Central Visayas RTWPB has earlier decided on a "zero wage increase" for the region this year.

The new wage increase will bring to P200 the daily wage level for industrial and commercial/business sector workers in Cebu, Negros Oriental, Bohol and Siquijor provinces and the independent cities of Cebu, Mandaue and Lapulapu, all in Metro Cebu.

But for many labor groups here, the "good as nothing" wage increase was "adding insult to injury," according to lawyer Ferdinand Pepito, of the Associated Labor Union-Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (ALU-TUCP), one of the two labor representatives in the wage board.

The decision to grant only P5 in wage increase prompted Marianito Ventura of the Trade Union of the Philippines and Allied Services (Tupas), to resign as labor representative in the board.

Pepito has also submitted his resignation from the board last week, right after the RTWPB approved a zero wage increase.

Pepito, however, attended the deliberation yesterday as his resignation letter has yet to be approved. He was also hoping that the board would reconsider its decision against giving a wage increase but Pepito did not expect that it would only grant P5.

"Five pesos is as good as nothing," Pepito said, after he emerged from the three-hour meeting of the board starting at noon yesterday.

The meeting was called to discuss the motion for reconsideration filed by Ventura, who was aiming for a board approval for a P20-daily wage increase.

But Pepito and Ventura were clearly outnumbered. The wage board voted 4 against 2 to shoot down Ventura's motion for reconsideration.

The four votes came from the two members representing management—lawyer Hedelito Pascual and Charles Streegan—and from the two government sector representatives—National Economic Development Authority regional director Romeo Escandor and Department of Trade and Industry regional director Artemio Caberte.

The four declined to be interviewed by the media.

After Ventura's motion for reconsideration was dismissed, Pascual then moved for the approval of a P5-daily wage increase. Pascual's motion was approved 4-1, with one abstention.

Ventura said he decided against casting a vote not only because they were clearly outnumbered but also because he feared that the workers might blame him for not agreeing to an increase, no matter how small the amount.

The chair of the wage board, Department of Employment and Labor regional director Melencio Balanag, was not able to vote since he could only cast a vote in case of a tie.

Earlier, Balanag had made public his personal position that he would support a P15 daily wage increase in the region.

Pepito said the ALU-TUCP has yet to decide on their next move. ALU-TUCP members may choose to go the streets for march-protests or to appeal the RTWPB's decision before the National Wage and Productivity Commission.

Ventura said he was also waiting for the decision from the secretary general of Tupas in Manila who was scheduled to meet with Labor Secretary Patricia Santo Tomas today.

Kin demand justice for slain Navy personnel

DAVAO CITY—The family of a 24-year-old Navy man from Davao who was found dead at a beach resort in Barangay San Rafael, Noveleta, Cavite on Nov. 27, is crying for justice.

Anna Coretha Morales, mother of slain Seaman 2 (SN2) Anthony Jay Morales, urged the National Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Justice, the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption, other government and private investigating agencies and the media to help them in their quest for justice.

The elder Morales said the Cavite police failed to deliver a comprehensive and thorough report on the killing.

Mary Ann, Anthony's elder sister, said this would be their loneliest Christmas as they celebrate it without the "family's favorite."

The victim was found dead with a bullet wound in his head by Lido Beach Resort gatekeeper Ramil Esguerra, around 3:30 a.m. of Nov. 27.

Prior to the incident, Esguerra reportedly saw a green Honda Civic with two persons on board. The car left after the shooting.

Police investigators also revealed that on the night before the incident, the victim had a drinking spree with his superiors—Lt. Cdr. Ruther Pescador, PO3 Roan Manaois, SN2 Nelson Brillo and ASN Leo Lanoso—at the Lanai Videoke bar and later transferred to Marilou's Videoke at Samonte Park, Cavite City.

Around 2:30 a.m., an hour before Morales was found dead, the victim reportedly asked permission from Pescador to leave camp for a midnight snack.

Pescador, however, denied that he was with the victim the night before the incident, contrary to statements of other Navy officers.

Anthony was enlisted in the Navy in April 2001. He was immediately assigned to the Cavite naval base with his duties mainly as a cook and kitchen assistant.

Cherryl, the victim's sister, said her brother had complained that every time he made mistakes, he was punched and kicked by his officers.

"Sometime in September this year, he called me up and said he wanted to quit the Navy as he was already tired of the physical abuse and torment inflicted upon him by his officers," Cherryl said. ***Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

GIFTS FOR SOLDIERS BUTCH ENERIO

Children of members of the Evangelical Churches in Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte, give Christmas gifts to soldiers who can't join their families during the holiday season.

Moro families get food from gov't

DAVAO CITY—Around 10,000 Moro families have availed of the food stuff that the Southern Philippines Development Authority (SPDA) distributed at the end of Ramadan on Sunday.

SPDA deputy administrator Esa Bayani said they had set aside P1 million worth of rice, sardines, noodles and coffee to be shared by the Moro communities in the different areas of Mindanao for the *Eid'l Fitr* celebration.

Eid'l Fitr is a feast for the Muslims after a month-long fasting period.

"The bulk of the distribution was (made) in Central Mindanao where there are several Moro evacuees," Bayani said.

Aside from the P1 million from SPDA funds, President Macapagal-Arroyo also allotted around P5 million for the same purpose but the distribution was made by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

The DSWD, however, prioritized people in war-torn areas in Jolo, Sulu, Basilan and Zamboanga.

"We are trying to reach out because our brother Muslims will have a different viewpoint after fasting," Bayani said. "We are trying to encourage them not to listen to intrigues outside."

He added that the giving of foodstuff to the Muslim communities in time for the *Eid'l Fitr* celebration showed the government's respect and support for the Moro people.

"We are thankful that we have some food on the table to share after fasting," said Imam Uzman Camamara of the Kalagan tribe.

He said the economic crisis has affected them badly and it was expected that many of their Muslim brothers would have a hard time buying food for the celebration.

Camamara's followers, numbering more than 100, have availed of the SPDA's project on Sunday.

Leonard Acasaran, SPDA consultant for the urban poor, said in Davao City around 600 to 700 beneficiaries received the foodstuff. ***Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Bacolod gov't hospital workers protest delay in bonuses, pay

BY CARLA P. GOMEZ
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—Employees of the government-owned Corazon Locsin Montelibano Memorial Regional Hospital staged a picket yesterday because of the Department of Health's failure to release their Christmas bonuses.

About 50 off-duty CLMMRH employees wore black bands and ribbons and carried placards demanding the release of their bonuses and hazard pay in a picket they held in front of the hospital's administrative office. Other groups of workers were set to hold a similar picket as soon as they are off duty.

The CLMMRH employees said if the DOH could afford to give bonuses to its employees in the central office and the National Capital Region, it should be able to give to those in the provinces to avoid discrimination.

About 400 CLMMRH employees were expecting to get their P10,000 Christmas bonus on Dec. 15 as the DOH has already released the bonus of its central office employees and for nationally funded hospitals in the NCR but none came.

The granting of the bonus was based on a directive issued early this month by President Macapagal-Arroyo that all national government agencies give bonuses to their employees, the amount of which would be pegged on their savings for the year. Subsequently, the DOH announced it was giving P10,000 in bonuses to each of its employee.

The CLMMRH employees were also demanding the release of their August to December hazard pay, which is equivalent to 10 percent of their basic pay.

The unpaid hazard pay totaled P3 million while the Christmas bonus would reach P4 million.

Hospital chief Domingo Vega said that the employees of CLMMRH were not the only ones who did not get their bonuses because no funds were released yet by the DOH for the bonuses of employees of nationally funded hospitals in the Visayas and Mindanao.

He said only employees of the DOH head office and of government hospitals in the NCR got their bonuses.

Vega met with the protesting employees and assured them that he has been following up the release of funds for their hazard pay and bonuses and will again go to the DOH regional office in Iloilo today to plead for the release of their funds.

He said a P4 million Sub Allotment Release Order has been issued for the CLMMRH to pay for the employees' bonuses but it was not backed by funds.

Samar mayors fear effects of failure to attend governor's cockfight derby

BY CYNTHIA A. BORGUETA
PDI Visayas Bureau

CATBALOGAN, Samar—Ten of the twenty-six town mayors in Samar raised concern that they might not be given funds for their projects next year because they did not participate a cockfighting derby backed by Gov. Milagros Tan.

The mayors accused Tan of losing her moral authority over local officials after she allegedly said that only the local government units with entries to the Four Cocks Pre-Christmas Derby held last Saturday could avail of projects with funding from the province.

Mayor Jesus Redaja of Samar town said he did not understand why Tan helped push the derby despite strong opposition from residents in the province.

The INQUIRER went to Tan's residence here on Sunday noon to get her comment but was told that she was still sleeping. Her security guards said the governor had given orders that she could not be disturbed.

The INQUIRER again tried to reach Tan for comment on Monday but was told that she had a meeting with her mayors in an undisclosed place.

Redaja, vice president of the Samar Mayors League (SML), was one of the 10 mayors who chose not to participate in Saturday's derby, which started at 4 p.m. and ended 7 a.m. of Sunday at the Catbalogan Gallera.

Betting ranged from a low of P50,000 to a high of P250,000, the INQUIRER learned.

Redaja said the other mayors who chose not to take part in the derby were Beatriz Tiopez of Sta. Rita, Wilfredo Estorninos of Basey, Rustico Talon of Almagro, Diosdado Herrera of Tagapul-an, Vicente Acilo of Sto. Niño, Chaning Gabieta of Jiabong, Mel Senen Sarmiento of Calbayog, Ponciano Alegria of Sta. Margarita, and Clarito Bocar Sr. of Marabut.

The mayors who took part in the derby stayed at the VIP lounge of the cockfighting gallery. They were led by Governor Tan, Masbate Gov. Antonio Kho, former Samar first district representative Catalino Figuerroa and his wife, Melipta, who is also the mayor of Zumarraga town, and Calbiga Mayor Melchor Nacario, the president of SML.

Also present were a number of provincial board members and spouses of some of the mayors who also placed bets on their favorites fighting cocks.

Governor Kho and former congressman Figuerroa, who owns the Catbalogan Gallera, sponsored the cock derby.

Redaja questioned why Nacario used the SML as promoter of the cock derby when there were mayors who from the very beginning were strongly against the holding of the derby.

"I don't understand why (Nacario) did it when there were already some mayors who were opposed to it," he told the INQUIRER.

The INQUIRER learned that at least two mayors did not show up during the derby but decided to send four entries (four fighting cocks) to avoid displeasing Tan.

A source who requested not to be named said each mayor spent P65,000 to buy fighting cocks and pay for the entry fee.

A staffer of one of the mayors said that his mayor-boss is not a gambler but decided to participate in the derby because of Tan's "no entry, no project policy."

Tan was reportedly in high spirits during the derby that she was even willing to bet up to P100,000 in one cockfight, according to a source.

Another source, also a staffer of a mayor who took part in the derby, told the INQUIRER that many mayors might have decided to take part in the derby because those who attended the derby were each given P100,000 in cash by Tan.

The source said the amount was given to the mayors hours before the derby began. The source did not know what was the money for.

"There is nothing to lose. (My mayor) was given an amount and there was also the promise of big projects," the source told the INQUIRER.

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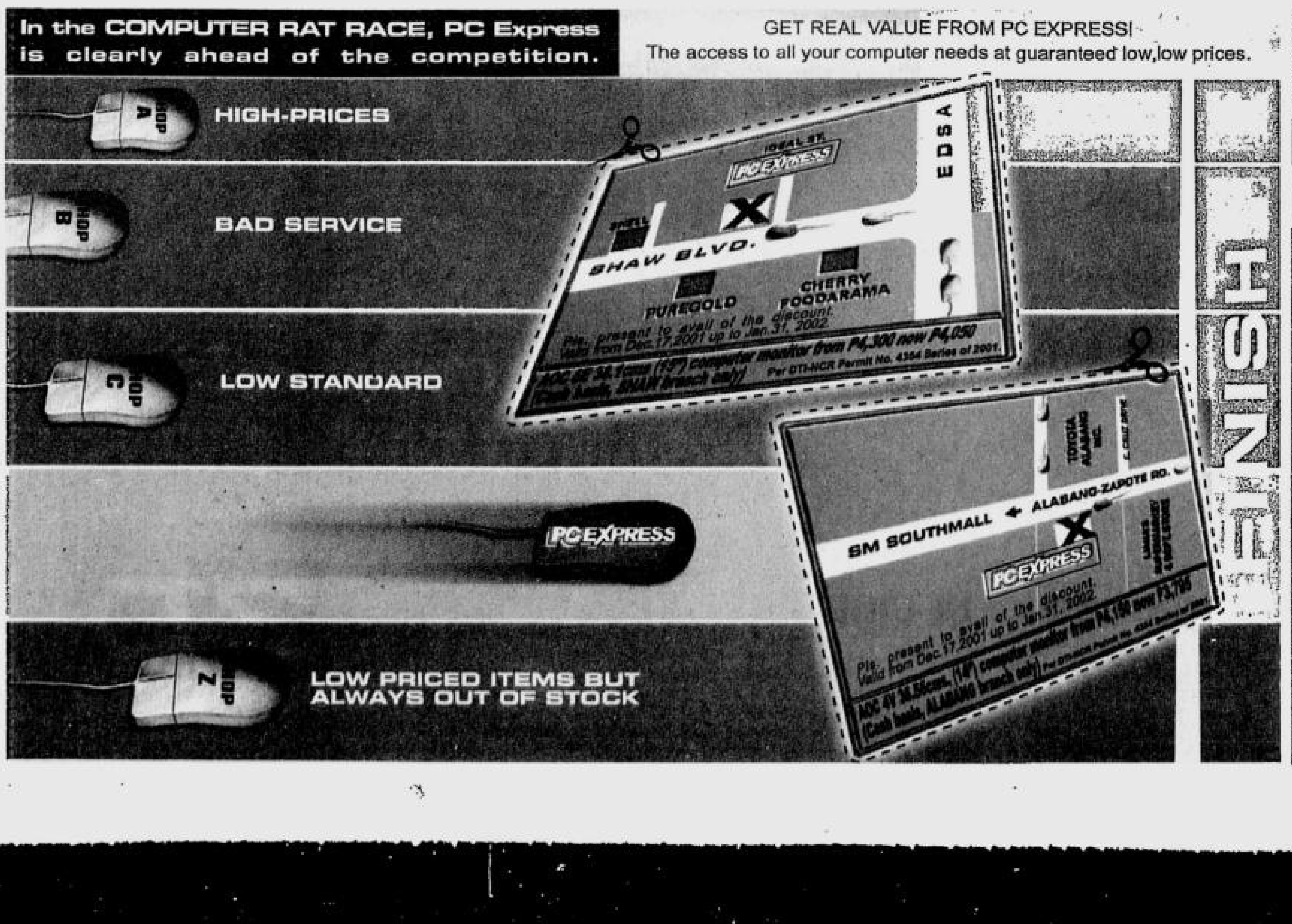

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The whole country will experience partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers particularly on the Eastern section.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	HI 33° Lo 22°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	HI 24° Lo 14°
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy with Rains	HI 29° Lo 19°
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 21°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	HI 33° Lo 22°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	HI 29° Lo 18°
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy with Rains	HI 29° Lo 24°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	HI 31° Lo 21°
Bacolod	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 23°
Roxas	Partly Cloudy	HI 30° Lo 24°
Cebu	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 23°
Tacloban	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 24°
Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 24°
Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 24°
Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy	HI 31° Lo 22°
Davao	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 24°

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ROUNDUP

Free medical aid to poor

MALILIPOT, Albay—Close to 2,500 poor families here can now avail themselves of free medical services and hospitalization under the "Medicare para sa Masa" program. The undertaking is a joint project of Albay Rep. Krisel Lagman-Luistro and the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. They signed a memorandum of agreement on Saturday. Under the agreement, the government will pay only 10 percent of the P1,188 yearly amortization of each family. Malilipot Mayor Herminio Bitara said the sick could now go to a hospital even without money.

Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Roads for farmers

LEGAZPI CITY—The city government has finished improving and concreting eight farm-to-market roads. The projects, which cost P8.5 million, aim to facilitate the flow of goods and services in Taysan-Maslog, Homapon-Mariawa, Homapon-Bagacay, Imalnod Crossing-Imalnod Proper, Taysan-Malangka, Puro-Lamba, Rawis-San Joaquin and Dita-Bonga. These projects would also hasten the response time of the police in crimes and violent incidents, Mayor Noel Rosal said.

Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

'Tanod' chief kills wife, son

TIAONG, Quezon—A village police chief shot dead his wife and son after a heated argument in Barangay Lagalag, this town on Sunday. Police identified the suspect as Hermilo de Laloya, 41, Lagalag Village police head. They said the suspect arrived home late at night reeking with liquor and engaged his wife Vilma in an argument. At the height of the altercation, the suspect drew his 9mm pistol but his son Emman tried to intervene. The suspect first shot his wife in the right chest and then shot his son. The victims died on the spot. The suspect is now detained at the municipal jail.

Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Polio vaccine

LUCENA CITY—The Department of Health here, in cooperation with the provincial government, has launched its "door-to-door" polio-free maintenance immunization campaign. The campaign aims to increase the number of children who are immunized against polio. The campaign was named "door-to-door" *patak* because health workers would go house-to-house to immunize children in this city and the towns of Agdangan, Candelaria, Dolores, Lucban, Padre Burgos, Pagbilao, Sariaya and Tayabas. Different vaccination teams will visit strategic villages to give the children the vaccines right at their doorsteps.

Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Tagum folk heave sigh of relief at Abu transfer

TAGUM CITY—The tension that gripped this town for several weeks now has finally subsided with the transfer of jailed Abu Sayyaf leader Nadzmie Saabdulla to Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig, Metro Manila.

Saabdulla, widely known as Commander Global, would join Hector Janjalani in the detention center there.

Mayor Gelacio Gementiza said his constituents were very apprehensive since authorities decided to lock up Saabdula at the Davao del Norte provincial jail here on Oct. 4.

The tension grew especially after reports indicated that the Abu Sayyaf was planning to rescue their jailed leader.

Gementiza said that the residents were since fearing for their lives.

"Commander Global (Saabdula) was really a security threat to us here. Now that he is out, our people could already sleep well," he said.

Saabdula, wearing a brown long sleeves shirt and pants, was escorted by a number of police, military and jail personnel backed by at least three armored personnel, as he was motored to Davao City around 6:30 on Saturday morning.

He was flown to Manila onboard the 8:30 a.m. flight of the Philippine Airlines.

Saabdulla's alleged followers, Sartimar Sali, Javier Sampang, Halik Sabdani were also taken to Manila on Saturday but they boarded another PAL flight.

The Abu Sayyaf leader was arrested in General Santos City in July in connection with the May 22 raid on the Barcelo Pearl Farm on Samal Island.

He was charged with murder for the death of three resort employees, who fought his group, which was then trying to kidnap visitors including an undetermined number of foreigners.

The Supreme Court ordered Saabdulla's transfer after provincial officials sent petitions.

The High Court also ordered the transfer of the hearings of the charges filed against Saabdulla and his co-accused from the Regional Trial Court here to the RTC Branch in Pasig.

Commander Global was said to be the intelligence leader of the Abu Sayyaf.

Members of the bandit group are now being hunted by government troopers in Basilan.

Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

'Youth bulge' worries population experts

BAGUIO CITY—An inconsistent government policy on family planning has resulted in an unusually long "youth bulge" in the Philippines, a population expert said.

Peter Xenos, a professor in demographic studies at the University of Hawaii's East-West Center, said it will take the country 25 more years before its youth population reaches its peak and the country's fertility rate stabilizes.

In other countries like Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan, the peak had been reached in 1980, Xenos said in a conference sponsored by the Philippine Non-government Organizations Council on Health, Welfare and Development early this month.

Xenos attributed the youth bulge to inconsistent government policy on family planning.

"You have a president who is supportive of family planning then followed by the next president who is not supportive then followed by another who is supportive and so on," Xenos said.

He said in the cases of Thailand and South Korea, their presidents come and go but their governments' population policies remain firm and consistent.

"The country's family planning policies have had some success but not that spectacular," he said.

Thirty-eight percent of Filipinos are under 15 years old and 28 percent belong to the 15 to 24 age bracket.

Only Laos, Cambodia and East Timor, in all of Southeast Asia, have proportions of population under 15 years old that are larger than that of the Philippines.

But the Philippines is well on its way into the "demographic transition," which means that its fertility rate is leveling, Xenos said.

However, it must contend with its youth bulge.

Xenos said the youth bulge will bring down the country's economic growth because savings and investments will be used on providing for the young.

He also said the country's resources would be almost exhausted when the demographic transition shifts by 2025.

Zero population growth will occur in the Philippines by 2085, he said.

If ever there is good news in the youth bulge, Xenos said the demographic transition is not that fast and so the country can make some adjustments.

He said Korea in the 1970s built a lot of schools but when the youth population dwindled, many of these schools were closed.

Xenos said because the shift is gradual, the human resources gap would not be that dramatic.

Moving with the demographic transition is social transition, he said.

Xenos said more Filipino youth are getting married at a later age and spend more time in school.

Tijuana James-Taore, program training advisor of the Washington D.C.-based Focus on Young Adults, said giving these adolescents better access to reproductive health is the key to managing the youth bulge.

She said the government should allocate resources for Filipino women to stay in school and delay giving birth. *Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

N. Mindanao seeks ₱10B in infra

OZAMIZ CITY—Local government leaders in Northern Mindanao have approved for programming into the national government's medium-term infrastructure financing plan about P10 billion worth of infrastructure projects.

The projects are designed to enhance the mobility of the region's people, goods and services, as well as make full use of its potential in agriculture.

Gathering late last week in nearby Tangub City for the 54th Full Meeting of the Regional Development Council (RDC), local leaders from the region's five provinces and eight cities recognized the line up of projects costing about P9.61 billion as priority in the next three years from 2002 to 2004 for the development of the region.

The National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) in Northern Mindanao, which served as RDC secretariat, said the projects were vital investments made along the region's strategic vision of becoming an agri-industrial and trade center on the island.

The infrastructure projects comprise mostly of construction and rehabilitation of arterial and secondary roads and flood control systems amounting to 42 percent of the total amount.

At least 43 percent of the proposed amount would be used to build and repair communal and small river irrigation systems.

The remaining amount will be used for the construction of government buildings.

Costing P3.25 billion in three years, the road projects will pave 800 kilometers of road networks throughout the region, easing the flow of goods to market centers and the entry of services to areas where these were deficient before.

Notable of these road projects is the 10-kilometer Alae-Phividec lane that will link pineapple and cattle-rich Manolo Fortich town in Bukidnon to agriculture processors in Misamis Oriental's industrial site.

Another project is the improvement of the 62-kilometer Tangub-Bonifacio-Don Victoriano road link that will bring the vegetable-producing Malindang mountain villages along its route closer to the market centers of Tangub and Ozamiz cities.

An initial allocation of P100 million for the proposed Panguil Bay Bridge is also included in the RDC-approved infrastructure investment program for the region.

The project estimated by Neda to cost more than P5 billion, spans Tangub in Misamis Occidental and Tubod in Lanao del Norte.

The P4 billion worth of investment in irrigation is expected to bring water to about 40,000 hectares of farms in Northern Mindanao, especially in Bukidnon province, in the next three years.

The repair of irrigation systems is expected to benefit at least 30,000 hectares of farms also in Bukidnon.

The RDC also endorsed for funding a P450 million project to upgrade the Cagayan de Oro airport to enable it to accommodate wide-bodied jets.

The business sector has identified this as a priority in improving the transport of goods in the region.

Meanwhile, the RDC endorsed to Malacañang a draft executive order transferring to the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) administrative jurisdiction of the Port of Benoni in Camiguin.

The Benoni Port is among the busiest in the region, catering to a growing number of tourists in the island-province. *Ryan Rosauro, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

GOVERNMENT troops sent to hunt Abu Sayyaf bandits in Basilan tie yellow ribbons around their rifles to signify their intention to finish their jobs quickly and return home for Christmas.

CHARLIE SACEDA

No sabotage, says Napocor of outage

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Mindanao plunged into darkness on Monday night, triggering speculations of sabotage, but the National Power Corp. said the blackout was caused by a technical problem.

Rafael Magbanua, Napocor spokesperson for Northern Mindanao, told the INQUIRER that a switch panel at the Agus II plant in Lanao del Sur broke down, causing the outages that lasted for five hours in some areas on the island.

Magbanua said other major power plants were affected when Agus II, which supplies power to the 138 kilovolt Kibawe line, tripped-off because of abnormal load.

"After the switch panels broke down it created a ripple affecting the other transmission lines that caused the blackout on the entire island. The only power plant unaffected is the Agus 6, which supplies Iligan City," Magbanua said.

Magbanua said that although sabotage played a great role in past power outages, Monday's blackout was caused by plain technical problems.

The blackout began in most areas at 10:20 in the evening.

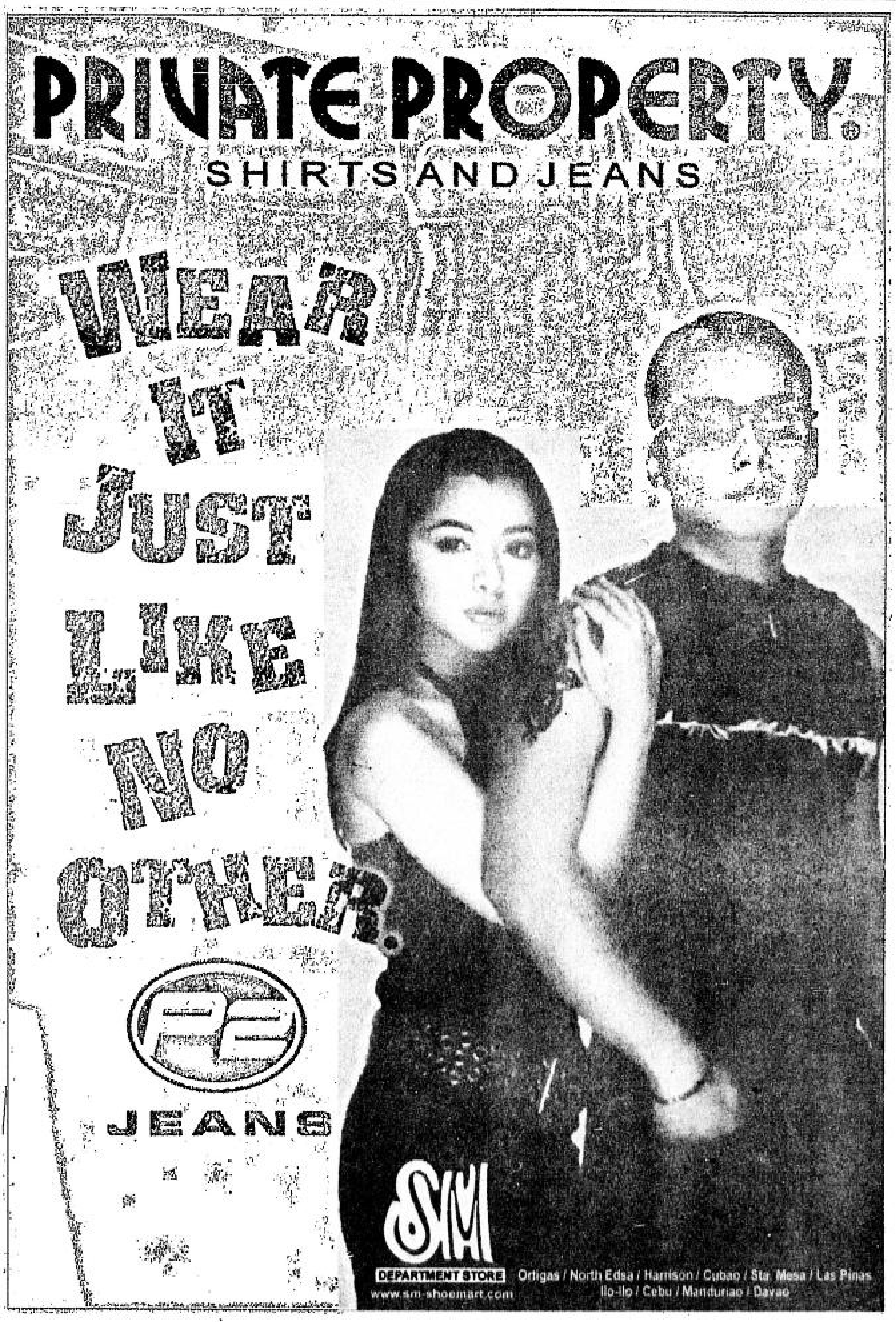
Cagayan de Oro City was without power for more than an hour while in Surigao City, power was restored at 3 a.m. on Tuesday.

In Davao City, the Aboitiz-owned Davao Light and Power Co. immediately fired its stand-by generators but only limited areas were served.

In Cotabato City, Crisente Ferolino, manager of the Cotabato Light and Power Co., said "sectional service," or limited power supply to certain areas, was provided to their customers.

Ferolino said Napocor's power supply was restored at 12:10 a.m. on Tuesday.

But in areas serviced by electric cooperatives, power was only restored when the Napocor was finally able to normalize the operation of its power plants. *Grace Cantal-Albasin with reports from Anthony Allada, Charlie Señase, Hernan de la Cruz, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

JUN BANDAYREL, Editor ■ ROLANDO B. FERNANDEZ, Bureau Chief

Saving Cagayan Valley's forests

Why people in Quirino province are not enamored by the glitter of gold

By Maurice Malanes

Cabarroguis, Quirino

OFFICIALS and local people's organizations in Quirino have come to terms with the clear and future danger of not saving whatever is left of the province's forests.

Why? Quirino, which still has a 63-percent forest cover, is the headwater and watershed of the vital Cagayan and Magat rivers, the cradle of agriculture in Cagayan Valley which is a major producer of rice, corn and cash crops such as onions.

Aside from hosting a comparatively rich biodiversity, the forests, according to conservationists, have carbon-absorbing trees that help protect the ozone layer.

Aware of Quirino's crucial watershed role, provincial officials led by Gov. Pedro Bacani don't want to trade their priced forests, even with the tempting offers of mining firms.

"This was why we opposed the mining contract of Arimco (an Australian mining firm) because the area it proposed to mine is a watershed," said Bacani.

Ironically, according to the governor, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources issued to Arimco last year an environmental compliance certificate, which would have allowed the company to operate in the province.

"But the municipal mayors, Rep. Junie Cua and I vetoed the ECC," he told a research team on reforestation initiatives, which the INQUIRER joined.

For their part, residents of Tucod village in Cabarroguis town, where Arimco sought to operate, said their vigilance also helped a great deal in prompting their elected officials to finally block the ECC granted to Arimco.

Learning from Benguet

Quirino folk and officials are not enamored by the glitter of gold because other mined-out communities are hardly good models of development.

"Look at the Agno River," Bacani said, pointing out the silt and toxic chemicals from mining companies in Benguet that killed the river.

The governor said he didn't want Quirino's officials and residents to be blamed for making the Cagayan and Magat rivers another Agno had Arimco pursued its proposed mining concession.

But long before the threat of mining, corporate loggers from 1960s until 1992 had called the shots in the province.

Using bulldozers and armed with 25-50-year timber license agreements (TLAs), logging firms had pushed their way into Quirino's virgin forests, raping centuries-old trees with their chainsaws.

The big TLA holders then included the Cua and Puzon families.

Speaker Jose de Venecia, according residents in Tucod, also used to own logging concessions in the province, which he later transferred to Reynaldo Cua, the father of Quirino Rep. Junie Cua.

The roads that logging firms used to get into the virgin frontiers and the giant trees they felled had made these frontiers attractive to migrant settlers whose basic livelihood skill was *kaingin* or slash-and-burn shifting agriculture.

Migrant settlers included those whom "development" victimized and forced out of their hometowns. A number of Ibaloi folk, who were displaced when the Ambuclao Dam in Benguet was built in the 1950s, for example, ended up in Quirino.

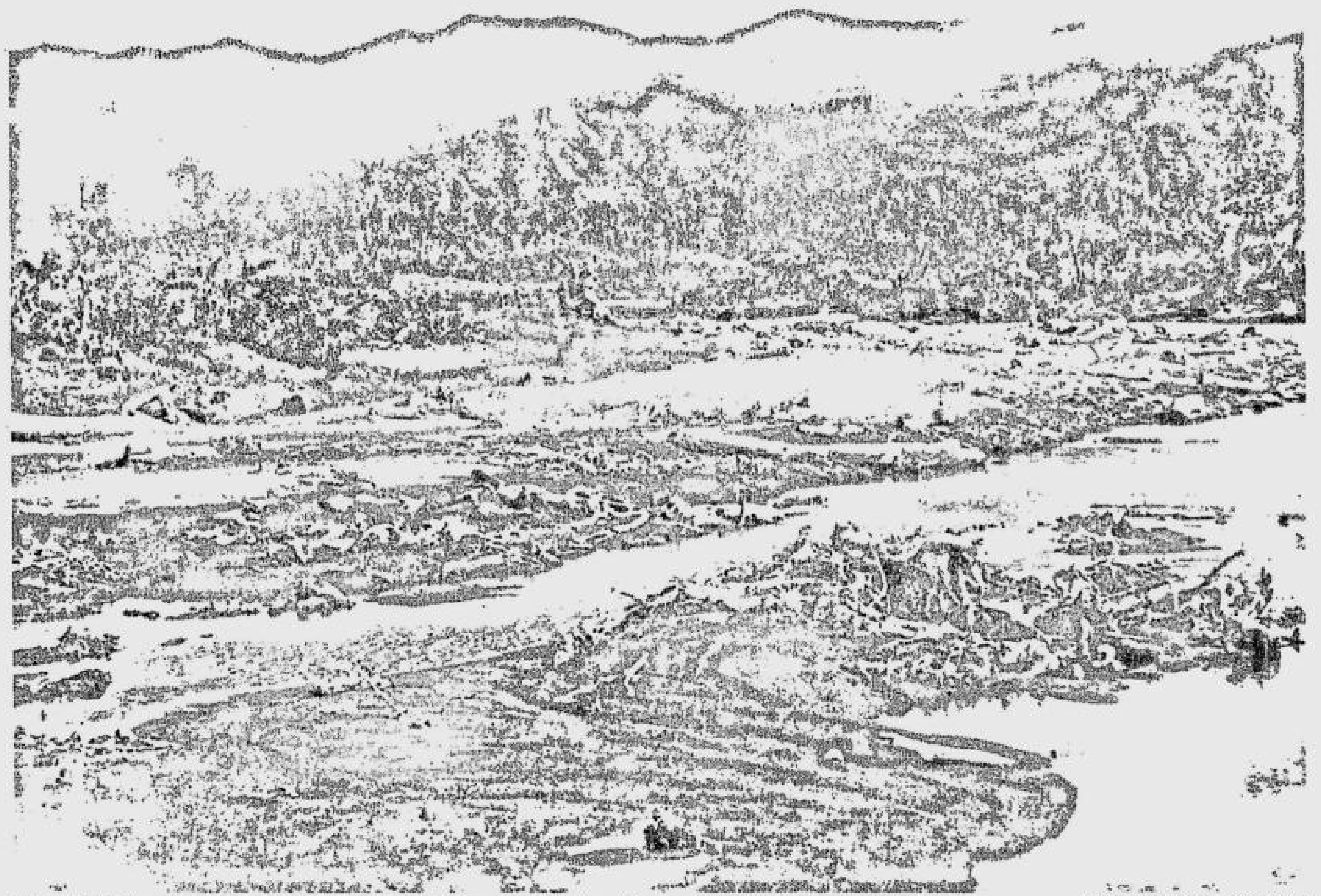
Before, the *kaingin* farmer-settlers would regard the corporate loggers as helping them a great deal.

"We would even invite the loggers to clear giant trees for us because we simply had bolos (machetes) and axes to clear a forest area for *kaingin*," said Olsino Pinis.

Pinis, a 47-year-old farmer and native of Atok, Benguet, migrated in 1969 to Don Mariano Perez, a remote mountain village of Diffun town, now populated by 627 settlers, most of them Ibalois and Kankana-eys from Benguet.

The loggers would salivate over the trees for timber, while the *kaingin*-farmer settlers would contemplate on the virgin forest soil for their *camote* (sweet potato), upland rice, bananas and other crops.

But thanks to an official ban on commercial logging in 1992, the big-time loggers were kept at bay.



UNABATED logging has turned this coastal area in Cagayan province into a vast wasteland.

FILE PHOTO/ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Logging ban

The ban on commercial logging had helped save Quirino's forests from going totally bald. With the ban, Quirino (population: 125,000) has retained a 63-percent forest cover of its total land area of 306,000 hectares.

The forest cover is short of the ideal 70 percent, but it is thicker than those of other provinces in the region and in the entire Luzon.

Isabela, a neighboring province, has only 30-percent forest cover, and Apayao, which has the highest forest cover in the Cordillera, has only 40 percent.

Despite the ban on corporate logging, reports of small illegal logging, or what the DENR calls "timber poaching" or "carabao (water buffalo) logging" (because poachers use carabao-driven sleds to haul logs from the forests to the nearest road), persist.

The latest case was reported in August when a joint team from the DENR regional office, police and local government officials confiscated some 8,000 board feet of lumber and a chainsaw in separate raids in four villages.

The timber poachers are villagers themselves, who are allegedly "protected" by some DENR personnel and policemen.

Those who were caught had a common reason: they were in dire straits after the deadly *tongro*, or what agriculturists call "bunchy top" virus, infested their banana plantations.

Intervention

The continuing timber poaching and *kaingin* activities, which replaced corporate logging, called for intervention by concerned authorities.

In late 1988, the DENR chose Quirino as a site of what it called a social forestry program, which the German government later funded. The program is now known as the Community Forestry Project-Quirino or CFPQ.

At the core of CFPQ is a conservation strategy, which the DENR calls community-based forest management (CBFM).

Seeking to address both the problems of timber poaching and *kaingin* expansion, the CBFM strategy allows community folk to harvest a regulated volume of timber from a designated production forest provided they stop new clearings for *kaingin* and reforest denuded forest zones.

The CBFM strategy also requires that community folk organize themselves into a duly registered cooperative or a people's organization (PO). The cooperative or PO coordinates with the DENR, CFPQ personnel and local government units on how to plan the use, protection and management of the community's land and forest resources.

The CBFM approach also teaches to community folk *kaingin* alternatives such as agro-forestry (under which fruit trees are inter-cropped with trees for reforestation), orchard-farming and other ways of maximizing farmland without clearing more forest areas for *kaingin*.

The Philippine-German CFPQ has since facilitated the implementation of the CBFM strategy in 14 villages covering 46,000 hectares.

Now mouthed even by Bacani and ordinary community residents like Pinis, the CBFM is seen as the most promising approach to strengthen Quirino's vital watershed role of nourishing the vital Cagayan and Magat rivers.

Danger clock ticks 46 abortions every 60 minutes

By Yolanda Fuertes

San Carlos City, Pangasinan

Oct. 5—Today my life begins. My parents do not know it yet but it is I already. And I'm to be a girl. Just about everything is settled though, even the fact that I shall love flowers.

Nov. 20—The doctor tells my mom that I'm living under her heart. Oh, how happy she must be. Are you happy, mom?

Nov. 25—I want to be called Kathy. I am getting so big already.

Dec. 13—What I want more than anything else is to see my mom. How do you look mom?

Dec. 28—Today my mother killed me.

Excerpts from "A Diary of an Unborn Child" (Anonymous)

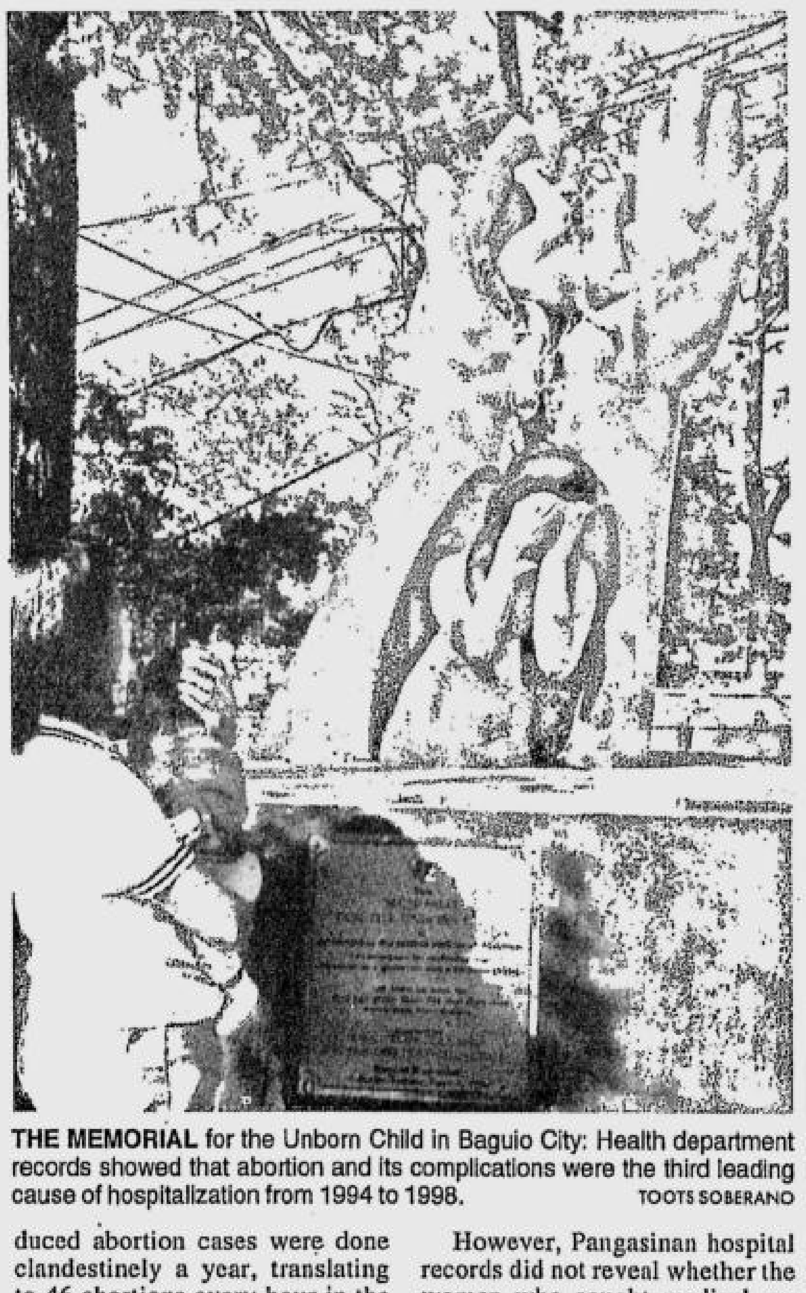
IF fetuses could talk, the last entry in the diary could be heard daily in Pangasinan.

Records showed that from January to November this year, 537 cases of post-abortion complications were admitted at the Pangasinan Provincial Hospital. In another district hospital, 211 such cases were reported from January to September.

The situation is the same in other provinces.

Abortion and its complications were the third leading causes of hospitalization from 1994 to 1998, according to the Department of Health.

A University of the Philippines Population Institute study in 1994 showed that up to 500,000 induced abortion cases were done clandestinely a year, translating to 46 abortions every hour in the country.



THE MEMORIAL for the Unborn Child in Baguio City: Health department records showed that abortion and its complications were the third leading cause of hospitalization from 1994 to 1998.

TOOTS SOBERANO

However, Pangasinan hospital records did not reveal whether the women who sought medical assistance had spontaneous or induced abortion. Doctors said the patients refused to admit they tried to force the fetus out, perhaps because of guilt or shame.

Salome Romero, an obstetrician-gynecologist at the PPH, recalled that a woman denied having used anything to abort her baby. "But when I examined her, (I found out that she used) two Cytotec tablets (an antacid drug used to abort babies)."

Evelyn Angeles, also an obstetrician-gynecologist at the PPH, said most women who resort to abortion aged 30-35 and already had several children. She said the women told them they did it because they could not afford to have another child.

Other women who abort their babies are overseas contract workers who discover their pregnancy just before leaving the country, Angeles said.

Commercial sex workers and single women who got pregnant out of wedlock are also among those prone to abort their babies, she said.

Women seek medical treatment for complications resulting from crude abortion procedures, which they did alone or with assistance from *hilot* (midwives). They either use herbal medicines, abortifacient drugs or have their stomachs massaged until they bleed profusely, the doctors found.

Health concerns

Gov. Victor Agbayani described the abortion cases in the province as "alarming."

To take care of women confronted with such situation, Agbayani said the province entered into a memorandum of agreement with EngenderHealth, an international nongovernment organization, on abortion prevention and management.

When women terminate their unwanted pregnancies through unsafe abortion practices, complications can arise that may endanger their lives, he said.

The DOH acknowledges abortion as a health issue. In fact, one of the 10 elements of the Philippine Reproductive Health Program is the prevention and management of abortion and its complications (PMAC).

Women who had induced or spontaneous abortion end up being hospitalized due to complications. This exacts a heavy toll on the government's already limited health system resources and also on the health and wellbeing of the women and their families.

Medical treatment

The DOH admitted that the existing health services for these women were limited to the medical treatment of abortion complications and did not include counseling and reference to other available reproductive health services, such as family planning.

To correct the situation, the department adopted the policy of giving "quality and humane post-abortion care services by competent, compassionate, objective and non-judgmental service providers in a well-equipped institution, complemented by supportive environment."

Pangasinan was the first province to implement the PMAC, with the assistance of EngenderHealth.

"We will like to reach out to the women, to tell them that they have a choice so they will not have unwanted pregnancies and later resort to abortion," Agbayani said.

According to the State of Philippine Population Report 2000 of the Commission on Population, induced abortions happen because of unwanted pregnancies. The most effective way of reducing incidents is by preventing unwanted pregnancies through effective family planning methods, the report said.

Humane care

Thus, aside from providing more humane care, the PMAC policy aimed at convincing women to accept family planning methods.

At the PPH and district hospitals, women who had undergone abortion are "handled with care" by the doctors, nurses and other hospital personnel. They are counseled about the "gravity" of their action and are taught family planning methods before they are sent home.

"It used to be that we were irritated with women who had abortion and who would seek medical treatment when they are profusely bleeding and almost dying," Angeles said. "We know that abortion is (murder) and we can't help but be judgmental toward them."

The treatment of women has hence changed, the doctors claimed, "after we undertook training and implemented what we learned on post-abortive care of the patients."

Romero said there is now a conscious effort to give the women "tender loving care." "We still tell them that what they did was wrong, but no longer in the authoritative voice we used before. *May lambing na* (There's gentleness in it)," she said.

Abu chief on 'blackest list'

(From page A1)

"It disrupts the channels of communications. It disrupts the chain of command," said Stan Bedlington, a retired senior analyst from the CIA's counterterrorism center.

"But the cells on the ground are allowed a certain freedom to operate. We can expect some of the cells will continue to operate," Bedlington added.

At least three al-Qaida leaders are dead, including Mohammed Atef, an Egyptian who was among Bin Laden's top aides. He was killed in an air strike near Kabul.

Two more high-ranking Egyptians, Tariq Anwar al-Sayyid Ahmad and Muhammad Salah, were killed in another strike near Khost.

Many of the al-Qaida leaders are still believed to be in Afghanistan, although some, if they're still alive, may have escaped to Pakistan or elsewhere.

Code names

Many of the names in the US blacklist are code names. Here are some of the most wanted:

- Ayman al-Zawahri, 50, believed to be Bin Laden's spiritual adviser and doctor, provided the ideology that drives al-Qaida, just as Atef provided the operational leadership before he was killed.

The two Egyptians became Bin Laden's top lieutenants when the Egyptian Islamic Jihad merged with al-Qaida in 1998.

In videotapes of Bin Laden released since Sept. 11, al-Zawahri has appeared at Bin Laden's side. His wife and children were reported killed in a US air strike in late November or early December.

He has been indicted in the United States for his role in the bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and has spent three years in prison for a background role in the 1981 assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat.

Al-Zawahri was sentenced to death in Egypt in absentia for his activities with the Islamic Jihad group in the 1990s.

- Shaihk Saiid, also known as Sa'd al-Sharif and Mustafa Ahmad al-Hisawi. A Saudi, Saiid, 33, is Bin Laden's brother-in-law and financial chief. Saiid has been with Bin Laden since his days in Sudan.

Saiid allegedly wired money to Atta in preparation for the Sept. 11 attacks.

- Abu Zubaydah, also known as Zain al-Abidin Muhammad Husain and Abd Al-Hadi Al-Wahab, is Bin Laden's senior field commander. Zubaydah, 30, is believed to have been born in Saudi Arabia but has strong ties in Palestine and Jordan. He has been sentenced to death in Jordan and is believed connected to many of al-Qaida's operations against US interests.
- Saif al-Adel, also known as Muhamad Ibrahim Makkawi and Ibrahim al-Madani. Al-Adel, an Egyptian in his late 30s, is Bin Laden's security chief. He is believed to be taking over many of Atef's duties in al-Qaida. He is also wanted in connection with the embassy bombings.
- Abu Mohammed al-Masri, frequently known as Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah, is an Egyptian in his late 30s. Al-Masri ran Bin Laden's training camps in Afghanistan, including the al-Farooq camp near Kandahar. He is also wanted in the embassy bombings.
- Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, al-Qaida's nominal spokesperson, is a Kuwaiti believed to be in his mid-30s. A former high school religion teacher, he left Kuwait in 2000. He was stripped of Kuwaiti citizenship after casting his lot with al-Qaida. Bin Laden is seen poking fun at him in the videotape released this week.
- Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, also known as Omar Muhammad al-Harazi and Abu Bilal al-Makki, is a Saudi who has reportedly planned attacks against US interests.
- Thirwat Salah Shihata, 41, an Egyptian, is the second-in-command to al-Zawahri in the Egyptian Islamic Jihad. He has been twice sentenced to death in absentia in Egypt for terrorist activities.
- Abu Basir al-Yamani, a Yemeni and Bin Laden aide.

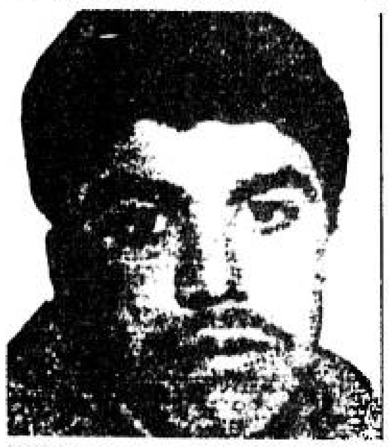
Other terrorists

Some leaders of terrorist groups affiliated with al-Qaida have drawn the attention of US authorities. They include:

- Tohir Yuldashev, leader of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.
- Taha Musa, a leader within el-Gamaa el-Islamiya in Egypt.
- Farooq Kashmiri, leader of Harakut ul-Mujahidin, fighting Indian control over Kashmir.
- Prof. Hafiz Mohammed Saeed, leader of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, also opposing India in Kashmir.
- Maulana Masood Azhar, leader of Jaish-e-Mohammed, another anti-Indian group in Kashmir.
- Hassan Hattab, leader of the Salafist Group for Call and Combat, in Algeria.
- Antar Zounbri, nominal leader of the Armed Islamic Group in Algeria.
- Abu Hamza al-Masri, leader of the Islamic Army of Aden in Yemen.
- Shamil Basayev and Omar Ibn al Khattab, rebels in Chechnya with ties to al-Qaida. *Reports from AP and PDI Research*

BIN LADEN supposedly at an undisclosed location as shown on Al-Jazeera TV broadcast last October. The TV station did not say how it obtained the image or whether it was taken before or after the Sept. 11 attacks on the US.

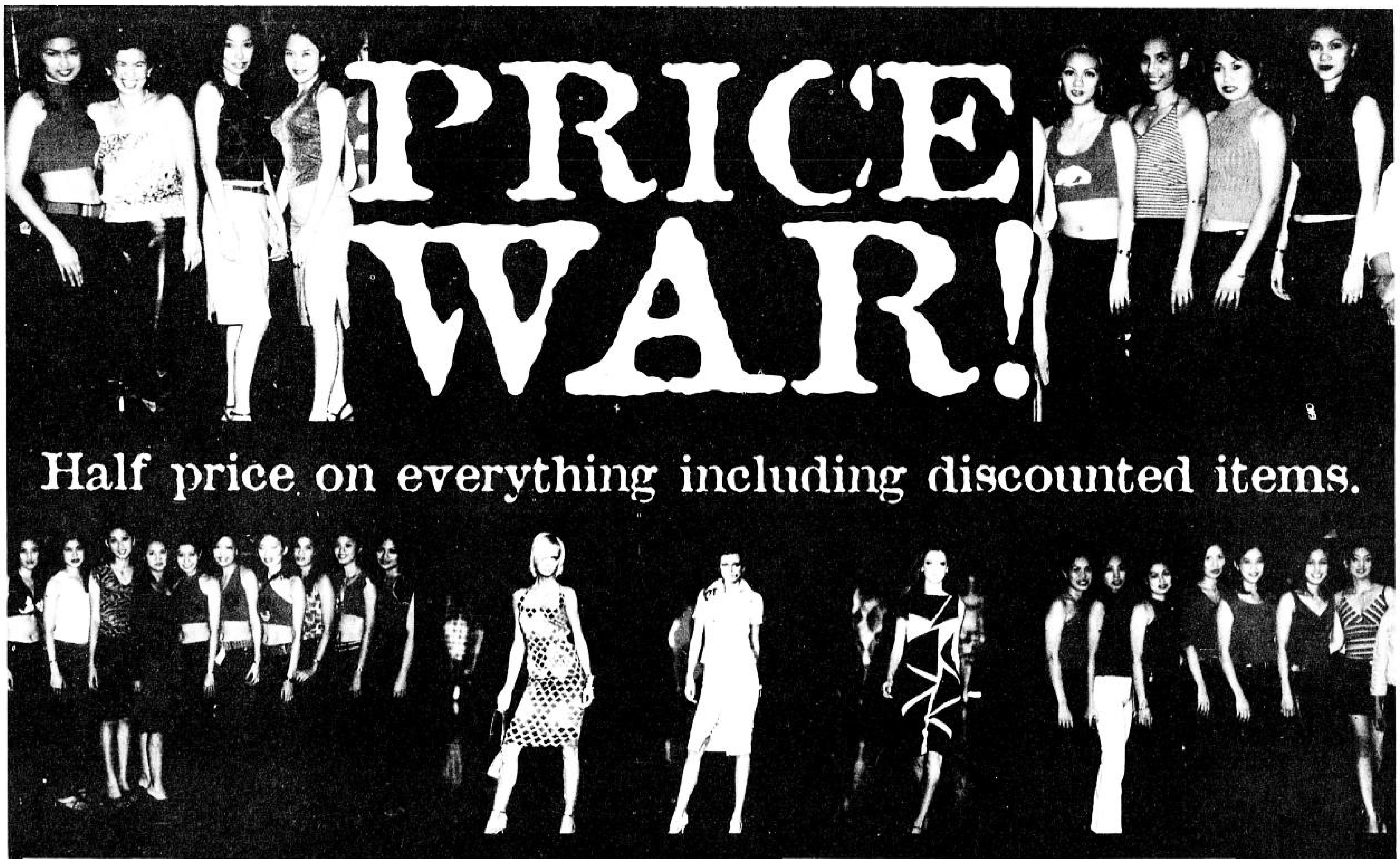
LEADER of the Kashmiri anti-Indian group, Maulana Masood Azhar, in this file photo, arrives at the Karachi airport in January 2000. AP



REPUTED leader of Algeria's most notorious terrorist group, Hassan Hattab. AP

KEY role: Shamil Basayev believed to be affiliated now with al-Qaida after conducting deadly attacks on the Russians during the Afghan war. AP

SPOKESPERSON for al-Qaida Sulaiman Abu Ghaith is shown at the Al-Jazeera TV network was stripped of his Kuwaiti citizenship after it was learned that he sided with the terrorist organization. AP



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GMA to use coco profits

(From page A1)

these were paid by coconut producers.

In ordering the use of the P700 million in SMC dividends, the President was banking on the Supreme Court's decision last week that the coco levy funds were "apparently" public funds.

The Supreme Court said its ruling would enable the PCGG to vote the shares that it sequestered in the United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB). The ruling is expected to allow the commission to oust five nominees of former President Joseph Estrada to the SMC board. The 27-percent stake of the CIIF in San Miguel is also sequestered.

The high court said its ruling referred only to the UCPB shares even as it declared that the coco levy funds were apparently public in nature.

The Supreme Court gave the Sandiganbayan six months to decide on the real owners of the coco levy funds.

Reacting to the observation that the coco levy funds could not be touched just yet as these were under litigation, Tiglao said: "Most probably the Sandiganbayan's concurrence (on the use of the funds) will have to be acquired."

He said the use of the P700 million would also have to be cleared with the PCGG.

Tiglao said presidential legal counsel Avelino "Nonong" Cruz had been ordered to finish all the paperwork needed to unlock the CIIF dividends.

The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) said the money must be withdrawn from UCPB and immediately returned to small coconut farmers.

"We are reminding the Macapagal administration that the shares in the UCPB are the small coconut farmers' money forcibly extracted from them during the dark days of Marcos. The coco levy fund is not the government's money and we will not allow corrupt government officials to once again feast on the small coconut farmers' money," KMP national chair Rafael Mariano said.

Master plan for industry

In Davao City, the Philippine Coconut Industry (PCA) has formulated a 15-year master plan for the rehabilitation of the country's coconut industry.

PCA Administrator Danilo Coronacion said the PCA was prepared to implement the master plan once the ownership of the coco levy funds had been settled and the funds released.

Coronacion said that although the PCA was holding strategic meetings twice a month, there was no final decision yet on whether to put up a trust fund once the government shares were monetized.

"This is a matter for the executives to decide, although the Supreme Court has given the Sandiganbayan six months to settle the issue," he said.

Dividends in UCPB

Tiglao said the dividends were likely deposited with UCPB, a company which SMC chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. supposedly acquired during the Marcos regime using the coconut levy funds.

The 27-percent stake in SMC is represented by 14 holding companies set by the Accralaw office for the CIIF. The UCPB is the administrator of the coco levy funds.

"The President's policy and directive is that as soon as government nominees move into UCPB, ways and means must be found to unlock some funds from the coconut levy," Tiglao said.

The government is set to install its nominees to the UCPB and SMC. The directors identified with both Cojuangco and Estrada have refused to vacate their seats.

At the Cabinet meeting yesterday, the coconut levy issue and the Cojuangco-brokered sale of 15 percent of SMC to Japanese brewer Kirin Co. Ltd. were not discussed comprehensively as had been announced by the Palace on Monday.

Good inputs

Key officials, namely Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, Finance Secretary Jose Camacho and Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas were at the Senate for budget hearings.

Tiglao, however, noted that "some discussions were made" and "good inputs" were given by Education Secretary Raul Roco, a former SMC corporate secretary.

One of the 14 holding companies, Rock Steel Resources, which was allegedly used by Cojuangco to buy into SMC during the 1980s bears Roco's initials.

Tiglao said Roco explained SMC's "corporate dynamics," including how shareholders use their blocs in gaining control of the food and beverage giant.

But Tiglao said: "I'm not at liberty to discuss the details of the discussion."

Ms Macapagal had earlier directed members of her Cabinet to refrain from making public statements on the levy and SMC-related issues, particularly the Kirin deal.

But in a chance interview with Palace reporters, Roco said the projected Kirin investment of P540 million was "a welcome development."

Roco said he did not agree to the warning made by PCGG Commissioner Ruben Carranza that Kirin's entry into SMC would dilute the value of government holdings in the company.

"Government has enough holdings to maintain control," he said.

The 27-percent stake in San Miguel sequestered by the PCGG is equivalent to five seats in the 15-member SMC board. The government has another two seats representing the 11-percent stake of the Government Service Insurance System and the Social Security System.

On the other hand, the 20-percent stake in SMC that Cojuangco is claiming as his is equivalent to three board seat, while Kirin's 15 percent is two seats.

Roco said he did not expect major objections to the Kirin deal because it would have "no effect" on the government's claim over SMC. ***With reports from Joel B. Escovilla and Joselle D.R. Badilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

'Danding has no business in SMC'

(From page A1)

ing right with Danding Cojuangco?" said David, who was also the military supervisor for the coconut industry during the ousted Marcos regime.

Plunder charge

David told the INQUIRER that the Supreme Court's recent ruling that the coco levy funds are "prima facie public funds" should pave the way to unseat Cojuangco as SMC chair, including the five representatives on the SMC board who were nominees by the Estrada administration.

"The highest court of the land is convinced that cases against Cojuangco, et. al. must be pursued," David said.

David, who's now on the board of the Philippine Coconut Authority added that with the high court ruling, Cojuangco could be among those prosecuted for plunder and the misuse of the levy funds.

Cojuangco had claimed that the 20 percent SMC shares in his name were acquired through loans and personal funds, and therefore could not be questioned as ill gotten.

"SMC, with a majority block of shares acquired through the use of coconut levy funds, is one corporation that the real coconut farmers have no documented ownership of," David pointed out.

He added not a single farmer can be seen to have a stock certificate of SMC, since the shares are under the name of 14 holding companies set up by the AccraLaw office. The holding companies, whose ownership are still being determined by the courts, are directly or indirectly owned by Cojuangco, David alleged.

He noted that it does not matter that the coco levy funds, which is estimated to be worth some P150 billion, will all be placed in government's hands instead of Cojuangco's.

"It (coco levy fund) may be vulnerable to graft if its with the government but the people could guard these so long as they are no longer in the hands of thieves, who have already made such a fortune with it these past years," said David.

New documents

The Office of the Solicitor General has been gathering and presenting new evidence to further strengthen the cases at the Sandiganbayan against Cojuangco with the farmers as witnesses to the scam.

Joey Faustino, the executive director of the Coconut Industry Reform Movement, Inc.(COIR), said that new evidence they gathered showed a rough computation and forecast on how the SMC may be controlled: Where the funds to acquire the shares may be sourced as well as how interest (carrying cost) may be paid.

There was also a "cash flow" document, which came with "Deeds of Assignment," "Voting Trust Agreements," and "Voting Trust Certificates" of three among the Cojuangco companies currently holding some 20 percent shares in SMC. These are Meadow-Lark Plantation, Inc.; Silver-Leaf Plantation, Inc.; and Primavera Farms, Inc.

All the documents were executed on April 13, 1984 in Makati, Metro Manila and had never been heard of or were they ever presented in courts.

The "Voting Trust Agreements" and "Voting Trust Certificates" referred to Cojuangco as trustee while the "Deeds of Assignment" were assigned to "Blank"—presumably to then President Marcos, COIR said.

He said that these documents were taken from the Palace vaults of the late President Marcos after the Edsa Revolution in 1986.

PNP gives itself 93% for crime solution

(From page A1)

year," he told reporters yesterday, citing the latest crime statistics.

Lantion's statement elicited muffled laughter from some reporters, who said in jest that the only case left unsolved was the murder last month of the popular actress.

According to records, the crime solution efficiency rate was slightly higher than last year's. In that year, 73,971 of the total 80,108 crimes committed were solved, accounting for a 92.34-percent efficiency rate.

Lantion attributed the high rate to the PNP's success especially in its campaign against illegal drugs, kidnapping for ransom and loose firearms.

He cited the confiscation in October of close to P1 billion worth of *shabu* (methamphetamine hydrochloride) from Mayor Ronnie Mitra of Panukulan, Quezon, and a similar stash worth P700 million from Chinese nationals in Zambales in November.

He said lawmen had also conducted raids on *shabu* laboratories that netted large volumes of the illegal drug.

"All these contributed to the high crime solution rate," Lantion said.

So far, only the figures for the first three quarters of the year were available.

As of October, 59,094 of the 64,876 total crime volume were solved, accounting for a 91.09-percent crime efficiency rate.

The crimes were classified into two: index crimes, which include murder, rape, robbery, etc. and which are punishable under the Revised Penal Code; and non-index crimes, which include kidnapping, illegal gambling, etc. and which are punishable under special laws.

Surprise

But the PNP's high rating in crime solution came as a surprise to some people considering the recantation of its main suspect Philip Medel Jr., Blanca's supposed confessed killer.

It is the National Bureau of Investigation that is now looking into the murder of the actress, whose body was found on Nov. 7 at the Atlanta Center in Greenhills, San Juan.

On Nov. 19 the PNP presented Medel, who said he killed the actress on the say-so of her husband Rod Lauren Strunk, to the media. High officials such as PNP Director General Leandro Mendoza, Justice Secretary Hernando Perez, Interior Secretary Jose Lina and NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco were present at the press conference.

But at the subsequent preliminary investigation of the Department of Justice, Medel went into hysterics and shouted that police had tortured him into confessing to the crime. He also cleared Strunk of involvement, saying he did not know the American.

Medel's retraction led to the NBI's takeover of the investigation and formed the basis for the dismissal of the charges filed by the PNP against Medel and Strunk before the DOJ.

It likewise put the police's investigative skills under ridicule and the entire PNP in a bad light.

World peace, family time top Santa's list

(From page A1)

Harry Potter was at the top of children's wish lists.

Santa replies to about 150,000 letters and he makes a point of writing to those who are not just seeking material things, elf Ollila said.

"If you want a letter from Santa, write what's in your heart," she said.

Santa and tradition

A lot has changed since Sept. 11, but people apparently still want to see Santa Claus.

Amid the snow-covered fells of Finland's far north, Santa is still sitting on his worn-out rocking chair receiving guests from around the globe.

"Everyone loves Santa," the tall and large Father Christmas said as he roared with laughter in his Lapland office.

"People like tradition. They like what Santa stands for and difficult times like these have brought back people's attention to what's important in life—the family—and that's good," he told Reuters, as he stroked his long white beard.

But even Santa is surprised that people have not let the events of Sept. 11 stop them from traveling thousands of kilometers to visit what he says is the true home of Santa, the symbol of Christmas for millions of children.

The attacks on Washington and New York that killed thousands of people, the deadly anthrax letters and the global economic downturn have shaken millions and stopped many people from traveling abroad.

Yet Santa counts himself lucky.

Although not as many people are expected to visit him as he had previously thought, Santa still expects some 420,000 people to come to Santa Claus Village in the Arctic Circle this year, the same number as last year.

Some 70,000 of them will arrive during the busy December weeks, with about 5,000, mostly children, sitting on his lap each day.

"I'm old but still strong," he said.

Most visitors come from Europe, but Santa Claus Village is also popular among Asians, particularly the Japanese, who are fascinated by Santa and the northern lights which appear up here as curtains of greenish-white light stretching east to west across the sky for thousands of kilometers.

Safe under santa's roof

Father Christmas attributes his continuing popularity to renewed attention on the family and family values and the perception that neutral Finland is a safe destination.

"People come here to be together and they come here because they feel it's safe," he said.

"Parents also don't want to break a promise to their kids about visiting Santa."

Visitors agree.

"It's a safe place to visit and there's snow and Santa," said Frankie, on a trip here from Dublin, Ireland, with his wife Michelle and 9-year-old son Brian, as they eagerly queued to talk to Santa.

What started out as a shack on the Arctic Circle outside the town of Rovaniemi to mark a visit by Eleanor Roosevelt in the 1950s now lures tourists with Santa's office, the postal center, gold-panning and reindeer and dog-sledding and snow scooters. There is also a Santa shopping center.

"We've come here for our honeymoon," said Mike Rodman, who is from the United States but lives in Yokohama, Japan.

"I planned to take my Japanese wife to the Maldives but canceled it to travel to a safe place. The Arctic Circle has been a big hit with my wife. The Japanese love it."

While Santa is more than willing to talk about his diet, how many hours he works a day and what he enjoys, he's very coy about the exact location of his humble home.

He says he still lives in the quiet wilderness of Korvatunturi in the eastern part of Lapland and travels each day with his reindeer to Santa Claus Village. *Reuters*

PCGG sowing public confusion–Accra

IN THE FRONT page article of your Dec. 13, 2001 issue, your story extensively referred to our firm, Accralaw, our lawyers (both former and present members) and the fourteen (14) holding companies which own 31 percent of San Miguel Corp. (SMC).

The report is not only "unbalanced" but, worse, inaccurate.

Please allow us to state for the record these facts to wit:

1. In the course of rendering legal services or as part of lawyering, Accralaw like other law firms and lawyers, incorporate corporations and act as nominee shareholder/director for numerous clients. In such cases, lawyers, as mere nominees, usually execute, and deliver to the client or his designated representative, Declarations of Trust and Deeds of Assignment.

2. Sometime in 1983, several Accra lawyers incorporated 14 companies which then acquired 31 percent of SMC shares. (At that time, Sen. Edgardo J. Angara was on leave from the Firm as he was then President of the University, of the Philippines).

3. As early as 1987, the concerned Accra lawyers submitted to the PCGG their affidavits stating the above facts and attested that they do not own or claim to own any share of stock of the 14 companies. In accordance with legal ethics, however, the Accra lawyers could not reveal in said affidavits the client's name without his/its consent. In fact, the Supreme Court rejected PCGG's and sustained the Accra lawyers' position in "Regala vs. Sandiganbayan, First Division," G.R. No. 105938, 20 September 1996, 262 SCRA 123.

4. When the SMC shares of stock were acquired in 1983, the shares of stock of the said 14 Holding Companies were simultaneously registered in the names of several "CIIF Oil Mills" namely: Legaspi Oil Co. Inc. ("LegOil"), Granexport Manufacturing Corp. ("Granex or GMC"), Cagayan de Oro Oil Co. ("CagOil"), Southern Luzon Coconut Oil Mills Inc. ("Solcom"), San Pablo Manufacturing Co. ("SPMC") and Iligan Coconut Industries Inc. ("Ilicoco"). The shares of stock of these CIIF Oil Mills are all owned by the coconut farmers by express provision of Article 3, sections 9 and 10 of PD 1468.

5. The PCGG is aware that the CIIF Oil Mills, not any Accra lawyer or any alleged crony, are the true and registered owners of the 14 Holding Companies owning 31 percent of SMC. The CIIF Oil Mills, in turn, are owned by the coconut farmers in their private capacities pursuant to PD 1468.

6. In the latest news report, it is claimed that the PCGG is unaware of the ownership of the 14 Holding Companies and makes it appear that it has just recently discovered the incorporation, by Accra and its lawyers. In view thereof, the PCGG declares that Accra's lawyers should reveal for whom they acted for in the creation of the said 14 Holding Companies. It is a matter of record that the 14 Holding Companies are wholly-owned subsidiaries of the CIIF Oil Mills. PCGG's ignorance about the ownership of the 14 Holding Companies is feigned, to say the least, considering that:

(a) In the documentary evidence submitted by the PCGG in the sequestration cases, it is expressly stated that the owners of the 14 CIIF Holding Companies are the CIIF Oil Mills, of which they are wholly-owned subsidiaries, to wit:

(1) COA Transmittal Letter to the PCA and UCPB dated 2 July 1986, Part B (On the Coconut Industry Investment Fund), par. 14, p. 4 wherein it was stated:

"CIIF oil Mills acquired 33,133,266 SMC shares at P50 per share or a total of P1.696 billion."

The aforesaid COA Transmittal Letter to the PCA and UCPB dated 2 July 1986 is attached to the PCGG's Pre-Trial Brief in Civil Case Nos. 0033-A and 0033-F as Exhibit "A";

(2) COA Report No. 2 dated June 20, 1986 on the CIIF, Part I, par. 2, pp. 17-18, wherein it was, inter alia, stated:

"2. CIIF Oil Mills acquired 33,133,266 SMC shares from fourteen (14) holding companies.

X X X

"d. The Shares [were] transferred by the Sorianos through the medium of the stock exchange to fourteen (14) holding companies; and the shares of these fourteen (14) holding companies would be acquired by the CIIF Oil Mills....

COA Report No. 2 dated June 20, 1986 is attached to the PCGC's Pre-Trial Brief in Civil Case Nos. 0033-A and 0033-F as Exhibit "A-2" as well as Annex "E" of the Joint-Affidavit of Ms. Bienvenida Cacatian and Rufina Santos-Laquindanum dated June 1, 2001. The said Joint-Affidavit was attached to the MANIFESTATION AND COMPLIANCE dated 4 June 2001 filed by the Republic of the Philippines with the Sandiganbayan, through the Office of the Solicitor General, in Civil Case No. 0033-A.

(b) In its own pleadings before the Sandiganbayan, the PCCG explained who are the registered stockholders of the 14 CIIF Holding Companies, to wit:

(1) OPPOSITION (RE: CLASS ACTION OMNIBUS MOTION TO ENJOIN THE PCGG FROM VOTING, ETC. DATED FEBRUARY 23, 2001) dated 8 May 2001 filed by the Republic of the Philippines, through the Office of the Solicitor General, with the Sandiganbayan in Civil Case No. 0033-F wherein it was asserted in paragraph 34 on page 21:

"34. Further, to accord PCGG the right to vote, it is no moment that shares registered in the names of the 14 holding companies and not the CIIF companies. It is a matter of fact that the 14 holding companies are wholly-owned subsidiaries of the CIIF Companies. The CIIF companies, therefore, fully control the 14 subsidiary-holding companies..."

(2) PRE-TRIAL BRIEF IN CIVIL CASE NO. 0033-F, dated May 9, 2000, filed by the Office of the Solicitor General and the PCGG with the Sandiganbayan in Civil Case No. 0033-F wherein it was clearly stated:

"1. CIIF Block registered in the names of the CIIF companies, aggregating 33 million shares at the time of acquisition...:

"The same fourteen companies were in turn owned by the following six (6) so-called CIIF Companies which were:

"a) San Pablo Mfg Corp., 9 % ; "b) Southern Luzon Coconut Oil Mills Inc., 1%; "c) Granexport Manufacturing Corp.,9 %; "d) Legaspi Oil Company Inc., 8 %; "e) Cagayan de Oro Oil Company Inc., 8 %; "f) Iligan Coconut Industries Inc.' 5 %—100 %

(3) COMPLIANCE dated 7 February 1994 filed by the Office of the Solicitor General with the Sandiganbayan in Civil Case No. 0033 in connection with its MOTION FOR AUTHORITY TO SELL SMC SHARES OF CIIF HOLDING COMPANIES to which it attached numerous documents detailing the corporate structure of the 14 Holding Companies and the CIIF Oil Mills including the following:

1. Annex "C" denominated as STOCKHOLDERS OF CIIF 14 HOLDING COMPANIES AS OF OCTOBER 31, 1993, e.g.

"11. Rock Steel Resources, Inc.

GMC	3,800,000	19.00
SPMC	3,800,000	19.00
LegOil	3,600,000	18.00
Ilicoco	3,600,000	15.00
Solcom	2,199,995	11.00
CagOil	3,600,000	18.00
Others	5	
Total Outstanding	20,000,000	100.00%

"13. First Meridian Dev. Inc.

GMC	1,520,000	19.00
SPMC	1,520,000	19.00
LegOil	1,440,000	18.00
Ilicoco	1,200,000	15.00
Solcom	879,995	11.00
CagOil	1,440,000	18.00
Others	5	
Total Outstanding	8,000,000	100.00%

2. Annex "D" denominated as CORPORATE STRUCTURE OF STOCHOLDERS OF CIIF 14 HLDING COMPANIES AS OF OCTOBER 31, 1993.

The 14 Holding Companies organized by the Accra lawyers as well as the 31 percent SMC shares are intact and duly accounted for. The action and conduct of Accralaw and its lawyers are not only lawful and moral but in full accord with the ethical standards of the legal profession.

Obviously, the PCGG is, for the sole purpose of sowing public confusion and political intrigue, publicly asking a question the answer to which it already knows and which it disclosed to the Sandiganbayan since the early 1990s.

Very truly yours,
ABELLO CONCEPCION REGALA & CRUZ
By: VICTOR P. LAZATIN
(Managing Partner)

House body votes 35-5 to junk impeach rap vs Ani

(From page A1)

JOAN BONDOC

UNDAUNTED Rep. Oscar Moreno: This is just the beginning. Desierto is really powerful and influential.

JOAN BONDOC

DEPUTY Ombudsman Margarito Gervacio: Front row monitor.

De Vera said that with the committee vote, Francisco's complaint appeared doomed at the plenary, or the entire House membership of 214.

"They would like to kill it now knowing that by voting for insufficiency, this case is as good as dead," De Vera said. "It looks obvious now that the Speaker, having deputized Albano to vote, has that position, so how can this survive the plenary?"

"It's sickening, I feel like vomiting. They would not even give Francisco and whatever evidence he has the light of day," De Vera said.

Expectedly, Desierto hailed the decision of the House committee on justice to dismiss the impeachment complaint, "not as a personal triumph but a vindication of the democratic processes in this country."

Desierto said he and other members of the Ombudsman's office were elated over the decision.

"With the dismissal of the complaint, the Ombudsman's Office will now, more than ever, prosecute the wrongdoers in the government. Now we can go on with the prosecution of deposed President Joseph Estrada," Desierto said.

He urged Francisco to "go quietly." Francisco had his day in court, he said, having been allowed to exhaust all the legal remedies to prove his allegations.

"He was also given complete attention by the media . . . at my expense, so I expect him now to be man enough to (shut up)," he added.

Session resumes

Eastern Samar Rep. Marcelino Libanan, committee chair, said he would report out the committee's decision declaring Francisco's complaint as insufficient in substance when Congress resumes session after the holiday break.

Under the new impeachment rules on procedures, the committee has 10 session days to report out its findings to the plenary and seek its approval.

Once in the plenary, the last chance to keep Francisco's impeachment complaint alive is for one-third of the members to vote to overturn the committee findings.

Both Francisco and Misamis Oriental Rep. Oscar Moreno, the first to endorse the complaint, said they were undaunted with the outcome of yesterday's vote. They said they hadn't lost faith in the members of the House.

"This is just the beginning," Francisco said.

"Desierto is really powerful and influential," said Moreno. "He's a tough nut to crack."

Rep. Roque Ablan Jr. (Ilocos Norte, Lakas-KBL)' drew attention during the committee hearing by repeatedly pacing the room, approaching his colleagues and calling committee members on his cell phone during the vote.

Ablan admitted he called up some congressmen to tell them to return to the hearing to vote.

"But that's because they told me to call them (for the voting)," Ablan said.

But Ablan denied there was maneuvering from the Speaker or from Desierto.

"Of course not. The Speaker has never talked to anyone to tell him how to vote here," Ablan said.

"There was no floor management. I acted only as timekeeper because we wanted to keep the proceedings orderly and short," Ablan said, explaining why he was busy moving around during the hearing.

Santa Claus

Reyes said he saw the winking from a "vantage position." He was standing near Francisco at the back of the conference room and behind the row where Gervacio was seated.

"A good number of those who voted "no" were nodding at Gervacio. What does that mean?" Reyes asked.

Reyes gave his own answer. "Probably (Gervacio) had a list. And so that's probably what they meant when they (the congressmen who voted "no") said 'Merry Christmas,' so Santa Claus from the Ombudsman might be appearing (to them) sometime these holidays."

Reyes was referring to Rep. Prospero Nograles, who ended his explanation by greeting everyone a Merry Christmas.

"They should be very careful because body language says so much," Reyes added.

Gervacio, who was also present when the committee voted last week on the sufficiency of form of Francisco's complaint, was seen taking notes of the voting.

He even stood up to see who was speaking when Rep. Joseph "Ace" Durano was explaining his "no" vote. Gervacio stood up to shake the hands of Rep. Antonio Abaya, who voted no, as he was leaving his seat, as well as Rep. Celso Lobregat who also voted no.

But Abaya vehemently denied there was something fishy when he smiled at and shook hands with Gervacio. He said the smile was spontaneous.

"That is very childish. If someone smiles at you, would you not return the smile?" Abaya said. "He shook my hands so is it a decent act on the part of a congressman to ignore that?"

"The trouble with losers is they invent things (*Ang hirap sa natatalo marami silang na-iimbento*)," Abaya said.

The people in the gallery were divided between members of civil society groups supporting the impeachment and a contingent from the Office of the Ombudsman who came with Gervacio.

The Ombudsman people applauded when Rep. Marcelino Libanan, committee chair, pronounced Francisco's impeachment complaint insufficient in form.

Five votes

Moreno was one of five committee members who found the complaint sufficient in substance.

The four others were Bayan Muna Rep. Liza Maza, Kalinga Rep. Lawrence Wacnang, Iloilo Rep. Arthur Defensor and Misamis Occidental Ernie Dulalas Clarete.

Moreno said he was "shocked" by the overwhelming vote against the complaint as he had hoped that a close vote would take place.

Thirty-five members who voted against the complaint said they did so after finding it to be based on hearsay and because Roxas had denied that he had bribed Desierto.

Some of them also said they voted against the complaint because Francisco violated the lawyer-client confidentiality rule.

The 35 who voted against the complaint were Representatives Antonio Abaya, Eladio Jala, Magtanggol Gunigundo, Romualdo Vicencio, Antonio Cuenco, Roberto Cajes, Oscar Gozos, Roy Pilando, Augusto Baculio, Reynaldo Uy, Roque Ablan Jr., Prospero Nograles, Edgar Chatto, Harlin Abayon, Leovigildo Banaag, Alipio Cirilio Badelles, Antonio Eduardo Nachura, Joseph Durano, Zenaida Cruz-Ducut, Aleta Suarez, Rodolfo Albano, Monico Puentevella, Joaquin Chipeco Jr., Bellaflor Angara-Castillo, Husin Amin, Celso Lobregat, Didagen Dilangalen, Rolex Suplico, Gabrielle Calizo, Enrico Echiverri, Raul Gonzales, Constantino Jaraula, Ernique Garcia, Juan Pablo Bondoc and Oscar Rodriguez.

Laguna Rep. Danton Bueser abstained, saying he would cast his vote when the committee's report reached the plenary next month.

Deputy Ombudsman Margarito Gervacio thanked the committee for its decision favoring Desierto. "We are very happy and overjoyed by the action of the committee," he told reporters.

He said his "gut feeling" was that it would be "impossible for the House to overturn the decision."

Insufficient arguments

But Moreno said that while he respected the decision of his colleagues, he found some of their arguments to be "insufficient in substance."

For instance, he asked, how could Francisco's complaint be hearsay when the lawyer had admitted being an active participant in the bribery of Desierto?

Francisco, a former lawyer of Accra, said his ex-client, businessman Luke Roxas, bribed Desierto in 1997 with P273,000 worth of video camera parts and half a million pesos in exchange for deferring investigation of the latter's Bank of Southeast Asia.

At the start of yesterday's hearing, members of the committee prevented Francisco from coming up to the committee and making clarifications about his complaint.

The committee also decided against considering the additional evidence Francisco presented in a Dec.10 letter to the body.

Francisco had submitted more documentary evidence in that letter, including sales invoices of the betacam parts issued in the name of Desierto's aide as well as hotel and telephone bills that establish the possibility that the Ombudsman met Roxas and Francisco in September 1997 to accept the bribe money.

De Vera said what happened yesterday was a repeat of the fateful day on January when the Senate voted against the opening of a second envelope containing bank documents possibly implicating then-President Estrada.

"History is repeating itself in so short a time. We never learn," De Vera said.

"This day proved that it's virtually impossible to impeach Desierto. This would change only if there is pressure from outside because our officials are too scared or too indebted to Desierto to (make) an objective decision," said Teddy Casiño, secretary general of Bayan. ***With a report from Michael Lim Ubac***

Fewer poor but life worse, says SWS poll

(From page A1)

The results of the SWS survey conducted last month were released on the same day the National Statistics Office announced a decline in the country's jobless rate—from 10.1 in July to 9.8 percent in October. A year ago, the unemployment rate also stood at 10.1 percent.

The SWS survey showed that 60 percent of Filipinos rated themselves as poor (*"mahirap"* in the questionnaire), down from 63 percent in September and 66 percent in July. Some 26 percent said they were "on the line," and only 14 percent said they were not poor.

For the first time this year, a clear majority of Filipinos—some 56 percent—said they were worse off now than they were 12 months ago. About a third or 30 percent said their quality of life was the same as a year ago, while only 14 percent said their lives were better off.

As far as the economy improving in the next year, pessimists (51 percent) outnumbered optimists (15 percent). About a quarter of all Filipinos (or 23 percent) said they expected the economic situation to remain the same.

A senior Asian Development Bank economist said the Philippines needed to double its economic growth rate if it hopes to make a dent on poverty.

"The long-term growth performance of the Philippines is somewhere along 4 percent while population growth is 2.3 percent, so there's not much of a positive dent on poverty reduction," said Gunter Hecker, country director for the Philippines.

"The Philippines has to achieve a growth rate of 7 percent to 10 percent over the long term," he added.

Fewer jobless

Unemployment data are collected at the start of every quarter. The jobless rate is traditionally at its highest in April, when new graduates join the labor force.

The NSO also said the number of the temporarily employed fell to 16.6 percent of the labor force, compared to 19.9 percent a year earlier and 16.9 percent in July.

This segment refers to those who worked less than 40 hours a week.

The total labor force rose by 7.9 percent from a year earlier to 33.4 million.

Employment in agriculture in October rose by 8.2 percent to 11.3 million, accounting for a constant 37.4 percent of the labor force.

Jobs in the industrial sector rose by 5.3 percent to 4.7 million, while employment in the services sector improved by 9.5 percent to 14.2 million.

The Philippine economy has been hit largely by a slowdown in its key export sector due to the simultaneous recessions in the United States and Japan, its two main trading partners.

Full-year exports are officially projected to contract by 15 percent this year.

Tighter belts

SWS said its survey conducted in November showed that there was "much pessimism regarding the economy" and that Filipinos were coping with the stress by tightening their belts—including lowering their standard for food.

The SWS said the Filipino's ability to cope was shown by a decline in the number of surveyed households reporting severe hunger from 3.6 percent in September to 3.3 percent in November.

"The evidence of belt-tightening is that for two quarters in succession, the median Self-Rated Poverty Threshold of poor people has been only P6,000 per month whereas it used to be P9,000 per month three quarters ago," the SWS said in a statement.

This median represents the budget for home expenses "that the worse-off half of poor families say is enough to avoid feeling '*mahirap*,'" the SWS said.

People are lowering their standard for food, according to the SWS, as evidenced by the median Self-Rated Food Threshold. This particular median stood at P3,000 per month this quarter, down from P4,000 three quarters ago. This means that poor families are making do with less money for food, with P3,000 being the critical level. Below this level, Filipino families already rate themselves as poor when it comes to food.

The SWS survey, conducted from Nov. 3-21 among 1,200 respondents, found "many signs of continued economic stress."

The polling firm said moderate hunger, or the proportion of households who went hungry once or only a few times in the last quarter, rose from 5.7 percent in September to 7.1 percent last month.

It said that as a result, overall hunger (or moderate plus severe) rose from 9.3 percent to 10.4 percent of households between September and November.

When asked if they lacked money (*"kapos"*) for their usual needs in the past 12 months, 53 percent of respondents said always or often and 33 percent said once or a few times.

Thus, those who were either severely or moderately short of money were 86 percent in November compared to 87 percent in September and July and 83 percent in March.

The economic-trend items, the SWS said, were all at their lowest levels this year.

Self-rated poverty refers to those who identify themselves with the word *"mahirap."* SWS has regularly tracked self-rated poverty since 1986 and hunger since 1998.

Pressing problems

In earlier statements, President Macapagal-Arroyo said more than 31 million Filipinos—40 percent of the population—were poor. The bulk of this underclass lives in rural areas.

Hecker, who is scheduled to leave the ADB next week, listed "population growth, unequal asset distribution and the weak performance of agriculture" as the country's three most pressing problems.

Agriculture accounts for just a fifth of the gross domestic product, but employs at least one third of the labor force.

Agricultural growth as well as improving agricultural productivity is "important because you have to be competitive in this global market," Hecker said. "The Philippines is getting to be a very high-cost place."

According to him, labor cost is high compared to neighboring Asian countries, "not because they (Filipino workers) are being paid too much but because cost input is high."

Hecker cited rice, the national staple, which cost "three times more than in Thailand or Vietnam."

On Tuesday, Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas said it cost about $5 a day to hire a Filipino worker, compared to about a dollar for neighboring China.

Hecker said government officials "are fully aware of the issues and they have plans to tackle these."

However, a global recession and security problems in parts of Mindanao, budgetary constraints and weak revenues were "simultaneous problems and are very difficult to be tackled all at the same time."

For the short term, Hecker said Manila's priority must be "to survive the present crisis and become ready when the global slump subsides."

Palace accuser seeks . . .

(From page A1)

press staff.

Marcelo was reacting to the assertion of Marita "Mai-Mai" Jimenez that his Aug. 16 meeting with the President was not a clandestine meeting and that he was not made to enter Malacañang through the backdoor.

Jimenez, former appointments secretary of the President and now her adviser on the utilization of overseas development assistance, recently walked the INQUIRER through the route that Marcelo purportedly took. She pointed out that, among other things, Marcelo did not pass through a kitchen as he had claimed.

But in his radio interview, Marcelo countered: "Jimenez said there was no kitchen. That's impossible."

Sought for comment, the President's spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said a reenactment would be "good."

"But we're worried it would just be a circus," he added. "It could turn out to be a mere ploy for media projection rather than the search for the truth."

Tiglao advised Marcelo to first listen to the testimony of Jimenez, who is scheduled to appear before the Senate blue ribbon committee tomorrow.

The committee is looking into the 57-year-old businessman's claim that the President had demanded "majority and controlling interest" in his telecommunications company, the Philippine Communications Clearinghouse Inc.

"Mr. Marcelo should first listen how Mai-Mai will explain her side of things," said Tiglao, who had earlier described the businessman as an "attack dog of the opposition."

Motor pool area

Marcelo said that on the day of the meeting he was collected from the Wendy's fast-food restaurant and taken straight to the Palace.

At the sentry post he did not even have to alight from the vehicle, he said, adding that he and his escort went straight to the "motor pool area near the Pasig River."

From there, he said, he was escorted upstairs to the Palace.

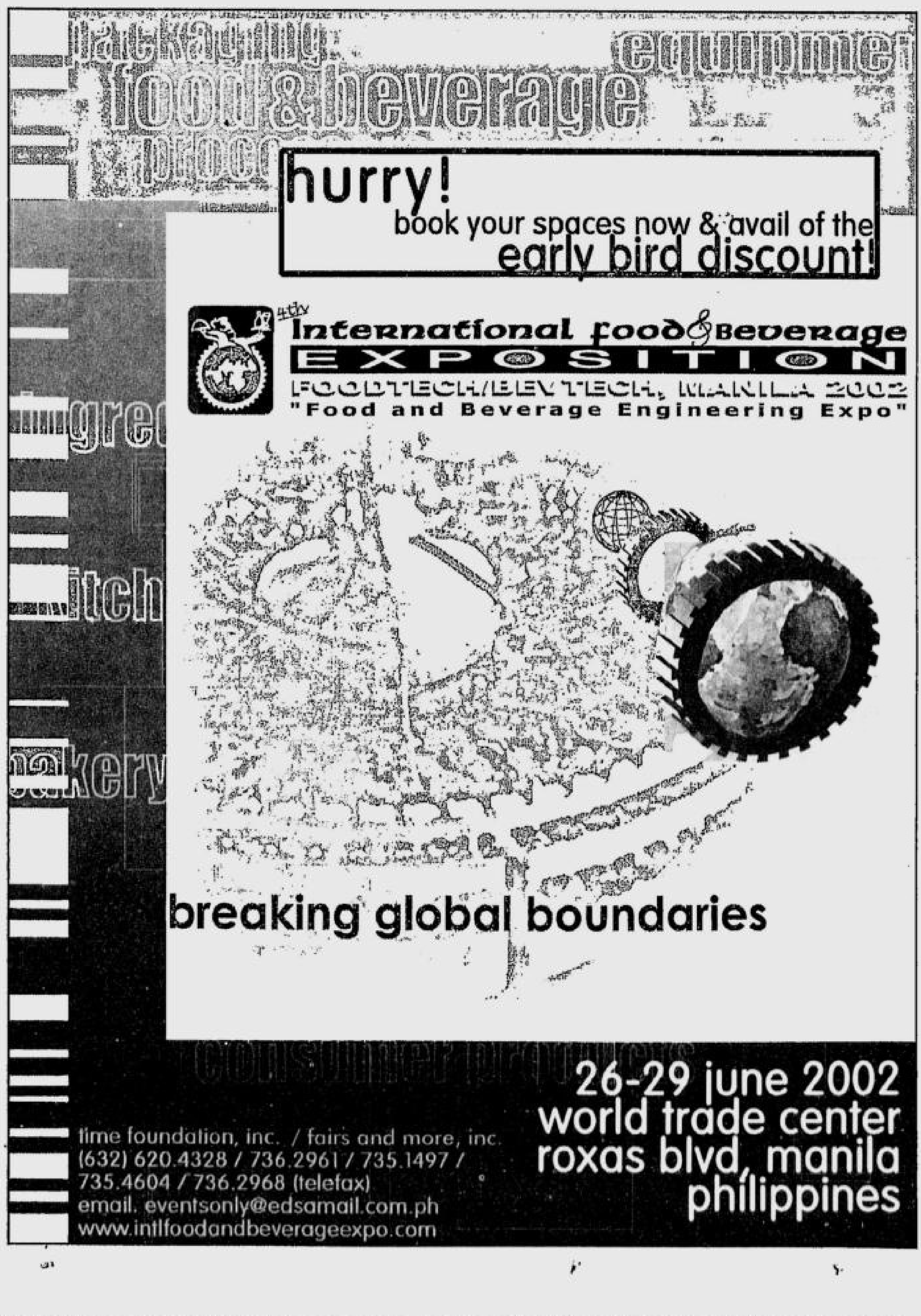
Marcelo said he was told by his escort that they would have to first wait for the then newly sworn military generals to leave before they proceeded to his meeting place with the President. Apparently describing the main living room of the Office of the President, he said he was taken to "a room full of portraits of former first ladies."

"I was told to take a seat and I was left alone. Somebody served me coffee," he said.

In his radio interview, Marcelo reiterated that the President had demanded 51 percent of the shares of PCCI.

He said he refused to surrender the firm's controlling shares.

The President then allegedly told him, "I cannot help you," at which point the meeting ended.



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President's Cup 2000, Final Day at 11 p.m. on Star Sports

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ▨ EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

Blades gun for crown anew

BY ROY LUARCA

GAME TODAY:
USLS Gym, Bacolod City
5 p.m.—Negros vs LBC Batangas

THE LBC Batangas Blades aims for the clincher, while the Negros Slashers seek the equalizer when they tangle in Game Four of their MBA National Finals at 5 p.m. today at the University of St. La Salle Gym in Bacolod City.

Foiled by the Slashers, 80-71, in Game Three Sunday night, the Blades are out to cut short the best-of-five series.

Even if they lose, however, the Blades have another chance to bag their first national title as the series would then return to Lipa City for the deciding Game Five.

"We know that Batangas will go all out tomorrow and we're prepared for it. *Hindi kami patatalo sa bahay namin,*" said Slashers coach Robert Sison.

These were the same words Sison uttered before Game Three and the Slashers did win to avert a sweep by the Blades.

That they did it without power leaper Leo Bat-og made the Slashers' victory even more impressive. Bat-og is out for the season with a hamstring injury.

Sans Bat-og, Sison will have to rely on Reynel Hugnatan, John Ferriols and Cid White to crash the boards.

The 6-foot-4 Hugnatan was a tower of power in Game Three, scoring 20 points and grabbing 20 rebounds as the Slashers outrebounded the Blades, 49-43, for the first time in the series.

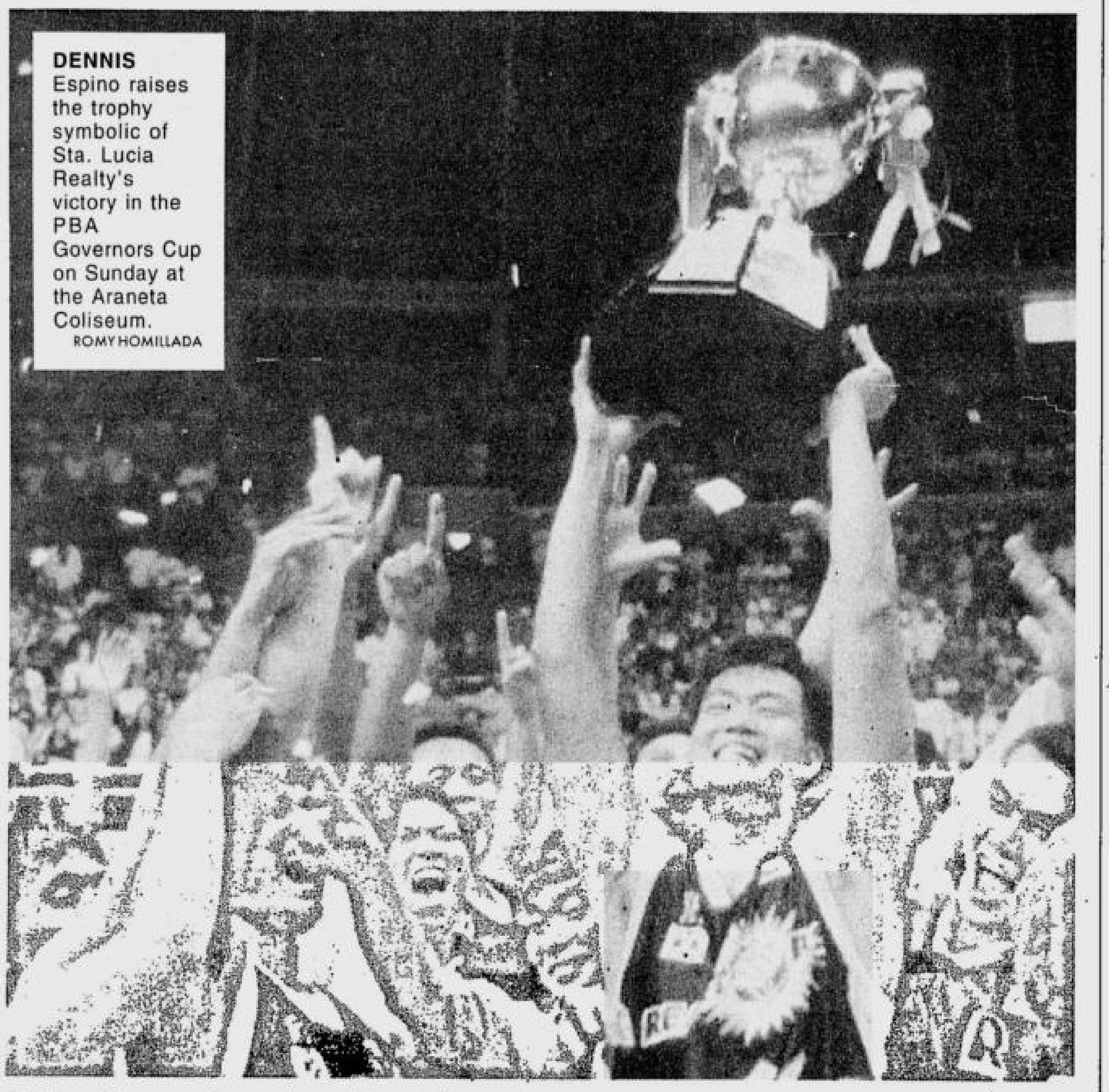
"Game Four will be more physical but we're ready to do battle. The Blades always bring out the best in us," said Sison, who is also gunning for his first national title.

Other Slashers expected to deliver are Dino Aldeguer, who sparked the Slashers' blitz attack late in the third quarter, Ruben dela Rosa, Jomar Tierra and Johnedel Cardel, who has yet to explode in the series.

LBC Batangas coach Nash Racela will again depend on Romel Adducul, Eddie Laure, Alex Espinoa, Jeffrey Sanders, Peter Martin and Tonyboy Espinosa, who was held scoreless in Game Three.

The shallowness of the LBC Batangas' bench was evident on Sunday as only seven Blades were able to score. In contrast, 11 Slashers broke into the scoring column.

Game Four will be telecast live over National Broadcasting Network Channel 4.



DENNIS Espino raises the trophy symbolic of Sta. Lucia Realty's victory in the PBA Governors Cup on Sunday at the Araneta Coliseum.
ROMY HOMILLADA

No basketball, just pure vacation–Black

BLACK

"WHAT I want now is a vacation to enjoy the holidays. No basketball, just pure vacation."

Thus said Sta. Lucia Realty coach Norman Black yesterday two hours before he was to fly to Los Angeles, California.

Black won his 10th PBA crown on Sunday after piloting Sta. Lucia to a 75-72 victory over San Miguel Beer for the Realtors' 4-2 victory in the PBA Governors Cup.

His last coaching crown came in 1994 when he steered San Miguel Beer to the All-Filipino Cup.

"I thank the players, the fans and the management especially to Buddy and Mr. Robles who never gave up on me despite the trying times," said Black moments after Sunday's victory.

Pop transfer raises SMB teams to 4

BY JUNE NAVARRO

THE PBA Board yesterday affirmed the transfer of Pop Cola's franchise from the RFM Group of Companies to Cosmos Bottling Corp. even as it deferred action on the Tanduay-Federal Express franchise transaction.

PBA Commissioner Jun Bernardino said the board's approval would pave the way for San Miguel Corp. to increase its number of teams in the league to four.

He added SMC got at least three-fourths or six out of the nine possible confidence votes but declined to name the teams and its representatives who had given their confirmation.

SMC, which already has San Miguel Beer, Barangay Ginebra and Purefoods under its wings, is expected to add Pop Cola to its fold after the Danding Cojuangco-owned food and beverage conglomerate completes its purchase of Cosmos.

SMC bought Cosmos this year but has yet to finalize its sale before it could merge Cosmos with Coca-Cola Bottling Corp., San Miguel's arm in the beverage industry.

The board also sat on its decision on the Tanduay-FedEx sale, pointing out that FedEx, which bought Tanduay's franchise at P75 million, lacks the important documents needed for the deliberations.

The board will tackle the issue again on Dec. 27.

Fil-foreign cagers sign for PBA draft

FIVE of what is expected to be the biggest number of Filipino-foreign players have so far signed up for the 2002 Philippine Basketball Association Draft scheduled Jan. 13 at the Activity Center of the Glorietta in Makati.

The notable Fil-foreign players who have already filled up an application form include Japan-born Francis Rauschmeyer, a former Florida Community College of Jacksonville star, and Leodito Yanogacio Jr. of Rutgers University.

Kalani Ferreria of the disbanded San Juan squad in MBA has also applied and all prospective Fil-foreign players who wish to join the draft have until Jan. 8 to submit their Department of Justice confirmations to be eligible in the lottery.

Deadline for application for all comers is the end of regular office hours on Dec. 28, 2001 with local-born aspirants needing to be 1) at least 23 years old or 2) a high school graduate at the end of 1998 school year or 3) a college graduate. Inquiries can be coursed through tel. nos. 636-1815 to 17.

Welcoat rips Shark; Ana scores

BY DENNIS U. EROA

GAMES TOMORROW: (Makati Coliseum)
3:30 p.m.—ICTSI vs Shark
5:30 p.m.—Montaña vs Blu

WELCOAT Paints drubbed defending champion Shark Energy Drink, 79-65, and forced a three-way logjam for second place in the PBL Challenge Cup last night at the Makati Coliseum.

The Paintmasters frolicked in the face of the Energy Drink Kings' tottering stand to improve to 6-4, same cards of their victims and the Blu Detergent Kings.

Pivotman Yancy de Ocampo and gunner Ren Ren Ritualo mocked their guards as they finished with 22 and 19 points, respectively, but it was the Paintmasters' defense which made the big difference.

Only two Energy Drink Kings scored in double figures with Chester Tolomia escaping with 22 points, but he scored just two in the fourth quarter. Clarence Cole added 10 but was held scoreless in the final 10 minutes of play.

In the first game, Ariel Capus and Arnel de Castro starred as Ana Freezers kept its quarterfinal hopes alive with a 96-83 victory over sluggish Blu Detergent. Ana improved its mark to 4-6 in a tie with Ateneo-Pioneer and Kutitap Toothpaste.

Scores:

First game:

ANA FREEZERS 96—Capus 22, De Castro 18, Pascual 17, Mendoza R. 13, Mendoza 11, Tubid 6, Oreta 4, Artadi 4, Vilar 1, Torres 0.

BLU DETERGENT 83—Codamon 19, Legaspi 16, Sanz 11, Billones 11, Bacani 7, Epondulan 4, Santos 4, Kalaw 4, Prior 2, Quiambao 2, Roldan 2, De la Cuesta 0.

Quarters: 16-20,48-45,72-68,96-83.

Second game:

WELCOAT 79—De Ocampo 22, Ritualo 19, Encarnacion 10, Manalo 10, Patrimonio 8, Canlas 6, Cruz 2, Tan 2, Orfrecio 0, Mamaclay 0.

SHARK 65—Tolomia 22, Cole 10, Basilides 8, Castro 7, Ortega 6, Malabanan 5, Juinio 2, Sotto 2, Robinson 2, Ybañez 1.

Quarters: 18-16, 39-35, 57-55, 79-65.

Airmen top AFP Games

THE PHILIPPINE Air Force team kept the overall championship in the recent AFP-PNP Olympics held at the different sports facilities of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The Airmen garnered 17 gold medals, nine silvers and four bronzes during the two-week competitions to earn their first back-to-back title since the event began 29 years ago.

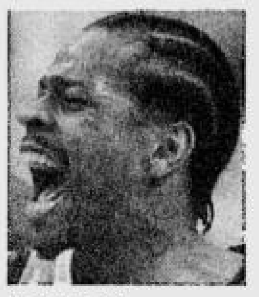
PAF Commanding General Benjamin Defensor Jr. received the championship trophy during the awarding ceremonies on Sunday at Camp Aguinaldo.

This early, the Airmen have their eyes set on a three-peat next year.

"One is good, two is better, but consecutive three titles would be like no other," said Lt. Col. Roelito Nolasco, PAF's Chief of Special Services, before the jubilant Airmen.

SPORTSWATCH

76ers stop Celtics



IVERSON

PHILADELPHIA—Allen Iverson scored 37 points and Aaron McKie got 13 of his 17 in the third quarter Monday to lead the Philadelphia 76ers to a 99-83 victory over the streaking Boston Celtics. Boston, off to its best start in 10 years, had won nine of its past 10 games. The defending Eastern Conference champion Sixers have won two consecutive games after losing seven in succession. Paul Pierce scored 24 points and Antoine Walker had 15 for the Celtics, who fell to 14-8. Walker missed all 11 of his 3-point attempts. Dikembe Mutombo had 17 points and 14 rebounds for the 76ers, despite getting into foul trouble in the third quarter. The Sixers put the game away with a 15-3 run over the final 4:25 of the third quarter with McKie scoring all but two of the points in the spurt.

Arevalo battles Chuang

CZARINA Mae Arevalo of the Philippines takes on Chuang Chia-Jung of Chinese Taipei in the first round of the women's singles in the AIA Asian Tennis Championships at the Victoria Park Center Court in Hong Kong. Coming off title victories in the Thailand and Vietnam ITF Juniors tournament last week, the 16-year-old Arevalo hopes to do well against Taiwan's No. 3 player. "It's going to be a tough match. Chuang is a very good player so I just give my best," said Arevalo, currently ranked No. 1041 in the world. Chuang, now ranked No. 600 in the world, is confident but cautious as she expects her Filipino opponent to put up a strong challenge.

Lyceum scores sweep

LYCEUM swept the elimination round following a 75-64 win over Polytechnic University of the Philippines, while National College of Business Administration's win over Emilio Aguinaldo College was placed under protest over the eligibility of its player yesterday in the National Capital Region Athletic Association basketball tournament at the Lyceum Gym. The Pirates topped Group with a flawless 8-0 win loss mark going into the quarterfinals. NCBA edged EAC, 64-62, to claim the fourth spot and join Lyceum, PUP (6-2) and DLSU-Manila (7-1) in the eight-team quarters. Group A's St. Francis (8-0), Colegio de San Lorenzo (5-3), Philippine Maritime Institute (6-2) also booked berths in this tournament supported by Pagcor, Mikasa, Pepsi, Splash and the Department of Agrarian Reform.

Press Corps guests

RAMON "El Presidente" Fernandez and William "Bogs" Adornado, members of the 1973 RP-ABC champion team, will be the guests of honor when the PBA Press Corps holds its annual awards on Dec. 22, Saturday, at the Bayview Hotel on Roxas Boulevard. Fernandez is the PBA's first four-time Most Valuable Player and a member of the first all-pro team that competed in the Asian Games (1990/Beijing) carrying the national colors. Adornado is the pro league's first three-time MVP.

Roligon derby today

THE MARVIN's Angels 4-Cock Derby fires off today at the Roligon Mega Cockpit in Parañaque City.

No less than 30 entries are expected in this derby hosted by popular cocker Jerry Perez.

Among the entries are Danny Ty, Boy Lechon, the group of Pasay cockers, Bochoy, Dennis del Rosario, Mandy Garcia, Emit San Juan, Granada, Roming Vergara and others.

Perez said the minimum bet in this derby is P5,500 and the pot money is P10,000. Promoter Danny "Showdown" Ty said the derby will start at exactly 6 p.m. He also said paying patrons are entitled to "buy-one, take-one" tickets up to 7 p.m. only.

For inquiries call Tiling, Fred or Rezel at Roligon Office at 833-1638 or 833-22-75.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1993 Fernie Donguines beat Bong Villamayor in seven moves of a French Defense to bag the Fabcon Open Chess Tournament at the MCC Headquarters on Taft Avenue. Also today in 1995, GM Rogelio Antonio defeated Uzbek GM Aleksandr Nenashev, 2.5-1.5, to keep the Philippines going at the 11th Asian [illegible] chess championship in Singapore.

Barcial captures Super Scooter crown

CARMONA, Cavite—Jaime Barcial became the newest toast of motorcycle racing when he emerged overall champion in the expert open category of the 2001 Shell Advance Super Scooter Championships which ended at the Carmona Racing Circuit over the weekend.

Barcial dominated the season-ending seventh and final leg over perennial rivals Gilbert Maningas and Sonny Villarama to close out with a runaway score of 236 points at the end of the prestigious seven-part series organized by the E.L. Racing Tech in cooperation with Shell Advance.

Barcial's closest rival was Mark Chua, who wound up a far second overall with 182 points after a fourth-place finish in the final race.

Villarama finished third place with 152 points.

Reigning National Super Bike champion Jolet Jao finished fourth overall with 150 points despite failing to show up for the final leg due to a motorcycle accident a few days before the race.

"I'm very happy to win this year. It's a good season for me," said Barcial, who won five of the seven legs held this year.

Barcial's younger brother, Mark Anthony Barcial, made it a double celebration for the family by ruling the equally exciting 70cc category over Villarama, John Dino Cahanding, Randy Ortiz and Dennis Chua.

The younger Barcial finished with 256 points against Villarama's 225 points and Cahanding's 105 points.

Sharing the limelight were R.B. Santos, who dominated both the Yamaha 50cc and multi-brand 50cc categories; Gerry Quinones, who topped the Honda 50cc; Chito Barcenas, who ruled the Yamaha Force 1; and Maningas, who won the 90cc.

Santos, one of the brightest finds from Malabon this year, defeated Ivan Santiago and Robert Altea in both the Yamaha 50cc and multi-brand 50cc categories to emerge as the only double winner this year.

Santos finished with 235 points in the Yamaha-sponsored 50cc class, 12 points ahead of Santiago and 58 points ahead of Altea. The 18-year old Santos also edged Santiago by only three points, 240-237, in the multi-brand 50cc class.

Quinones finished with 138 points in the Honda 50cc category against 119 points of Ervin Ong-See and 108 points of Anthony Yamson. Quinones also dominated the final leg.

Barcenas topped the Yamaha Force 1 category with 222 points, beating Geoffrey Aguisanda with 211 points and Kim de Leon with 162 points.

Maningas, on the other hand, finished way ahead of Villarama, Chua, Barcial and Cahanding in the 90cc category. Maningas had 268 points against Villarama's 190 points and Chua's 187 points.

Shell brand manager for Motorcycle Oil Serge Bernal awarded the trophies and cash prizes to the winners, assisted by race director Elson Carpio.

An appeal to Monico

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

RA 9064 otherwise known as the "Sports Benefits and Incentives Act of 2001" should be amended by Congress because it is unfair and discriminatory to world-class Filipino athletes like billiards champion Efren "Bata" Reyes, golfer Dorothy Delasin and bowler Paeng Nepomuceno whose events are not in the Olympic calendar. Lawmakers, notably former PSC commissioner and now Bacolod City Rep. Monico Putentevella who chairs the House committee on games and sports, should correct this flaw. This unequal treatment of sporting heroes is a blatant botch which is leaving some feeling queasy.

Signed into law by President Macapagal-Arroyo last April 2, 2001, RA 9064 grants cash and other incentives to medal winners in international competitions sanctioned by the International Olympic Committee and IOC-recognized tournaments held every four years like the Olympic Games. But because billiards, golf and bowling are non-Olympic events, Reyes, Delasin and Nepomuceno do not qualify for the rewards, leading many to ask: Where is fairness here?

Reyes and Delasin, voted by both SCOOP and the Philippine Sportswriters Association as this year's top athletes, and Nepomuceno, who won the coveted awards many times in the most recent past, should be treated more kindly by the government. As I have said before, it is not their fault if their sport is not in the Olympics. There is a very serious oversight here for clearly they cannot be recognized as beneficiaries of RA 9064 because they did not win in the Olympics. In effect, it would now appear that they have accomplished nothing. Where is justice here?

Reyes, Delasin and Nepomuceno are true champions worthy of emulation. Their victories are easily at par with any Olympic gold medal winners. As a matter of fact, they are better known around the world more than any Filipino achiever in recent memory.

* * *

BASKETBALL NOTES. It's long overdue, but never-say-die Sta. Lucia Realty finally won its first ever PBA title after nearly a decade by capturing the season-ending Governors' Cup, be[illegible] touted San Miguel Beer, 75-72, in Game [illegible] 4-2 tally in the best-of-seven title series. My warmest congratulations to coach Norman Black, consultant Alfrancis Chua, all-heart Chris Tan who sealed the victory by scoring the winning three-point shot with only 3.3 seconds left to play, esteemed friend and team manager Buddy Encarnado, and last, but not the least, sportsman-businessman Exy Robles and their loyal fans and supporters... Youthful Tac Padilla, owner of Spring Cooking Oil, this year's National Open basketball champion, did not deny nor confirm published reports that his team is joining the MBA. A national shooter like his father Olympian Tom Ong, father and son are much admired for their humility. God bless 'em.

* * *

For inquiries, call fax/phone (044)933-1214.

GMA invited to PSA annual awards

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has been invited guest of honor and speaker during the Philippine Sportswriters Association Annual Awards on Jan. 11 at the Holiday Inn Manila.

Arroyo will be the fourth president of the republic to grace the annual awards of the PSA, the country's oldest news organization founded in 1949 by a group of writers led by former Press Secretary Teddy Benigno and Malaya publisher Pocholo Romualdez.

Other chief executives who graced the traditional PSA Annual Awards, the country's most prestigious in the field of sports, were former Presidents Ferdinand Marcos, Corazon Aquino, and Fidel Ramos. President Joseph Estrada sent his son Jinngoy in last year's affair.

Arroyo accepted a personal invitation by PSA president Lito A. Tacujan when he and fellow sports editors and columnists paid a courtesy call in Malacañang along with members of the Philippine contingent to the Kuala Lumpur Southeast Asian Games in September.

"I would like to be present during the Awards Night but please inform me in advance," the Chief Executive assured the PSA president.

The Annual Awards, sponsored by Red Bull, is supported by the Philippine Sports Commission.

The President will confer the top Athletes of the Year awards to world billiards champion Efren "Bata" Reyes and Fil-American golfer Dorothy Joy Delasin.

The sportswriting fraternity will also present major awards to the top athletes of various sports. Among those selected for the Major Awards are San Miguel Beer slotman Danny Ildefonso (professional basketball), international boxing champion Manny Pacquiao, Southeast Asian Games double gold medalist Eduardo Buenavista of athletics and horse-of-the-year Wind Blown.

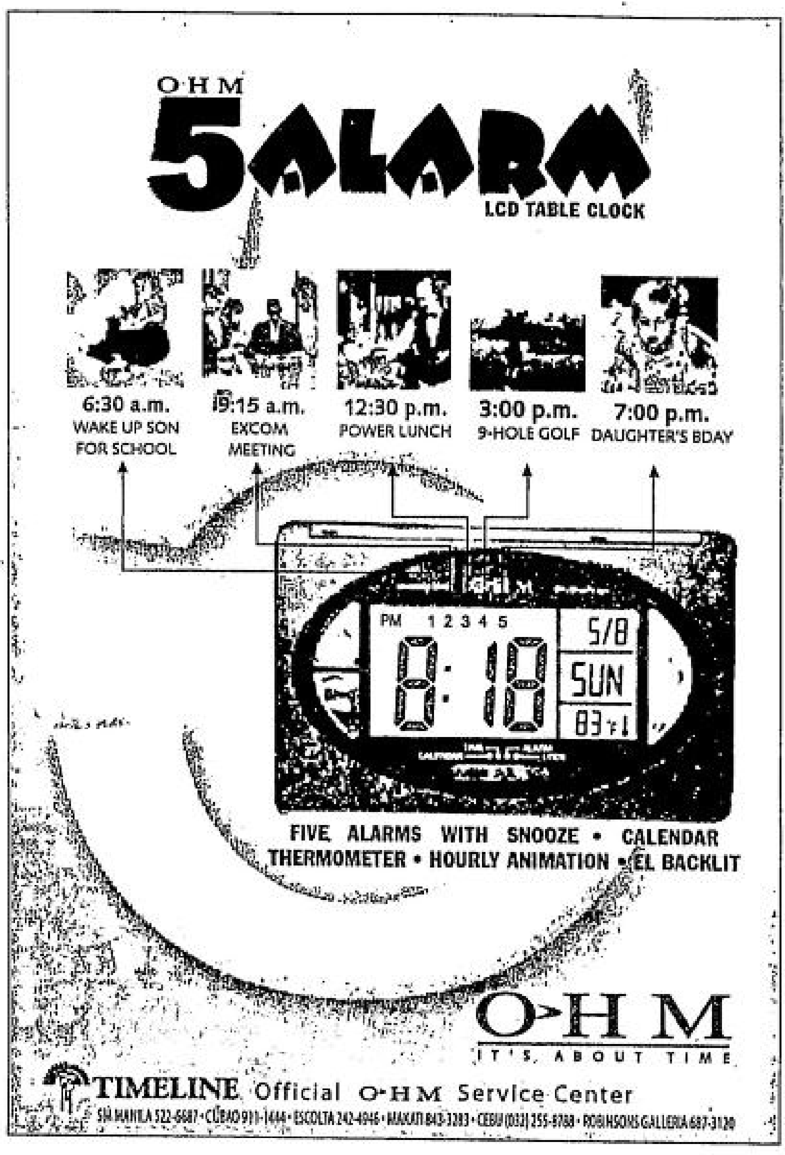
Chess tourney begins

IT'S all systems go as the "NCFP Pamaskong Handog" 2001 National Open Active Chess Team Championship" unfolds at 1 p.m. today at the 5th Floor Building A of the SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City.

Interested teams may still register at the playing venue before 12 noon today.

Organized and supported by the NCFP board of directors headed by chairman/president lawyer Matias V. Defensor, the three-day tourney offers a total cash prize P142,000, with the champion team receiving P50,000, runner-up – P30,000 and third placer – P20,000.

Individual board champions will also receive P2,000 each.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5 ALARM
LCD TABLE CLOCK
6:30 a.m. WAKE UP SON FOR SCHOOL
9:15 a.m. EXCOM MEETING
12:30 p.m. POWER LUNCH
3:00 p.m. 9-HOLE GOLF
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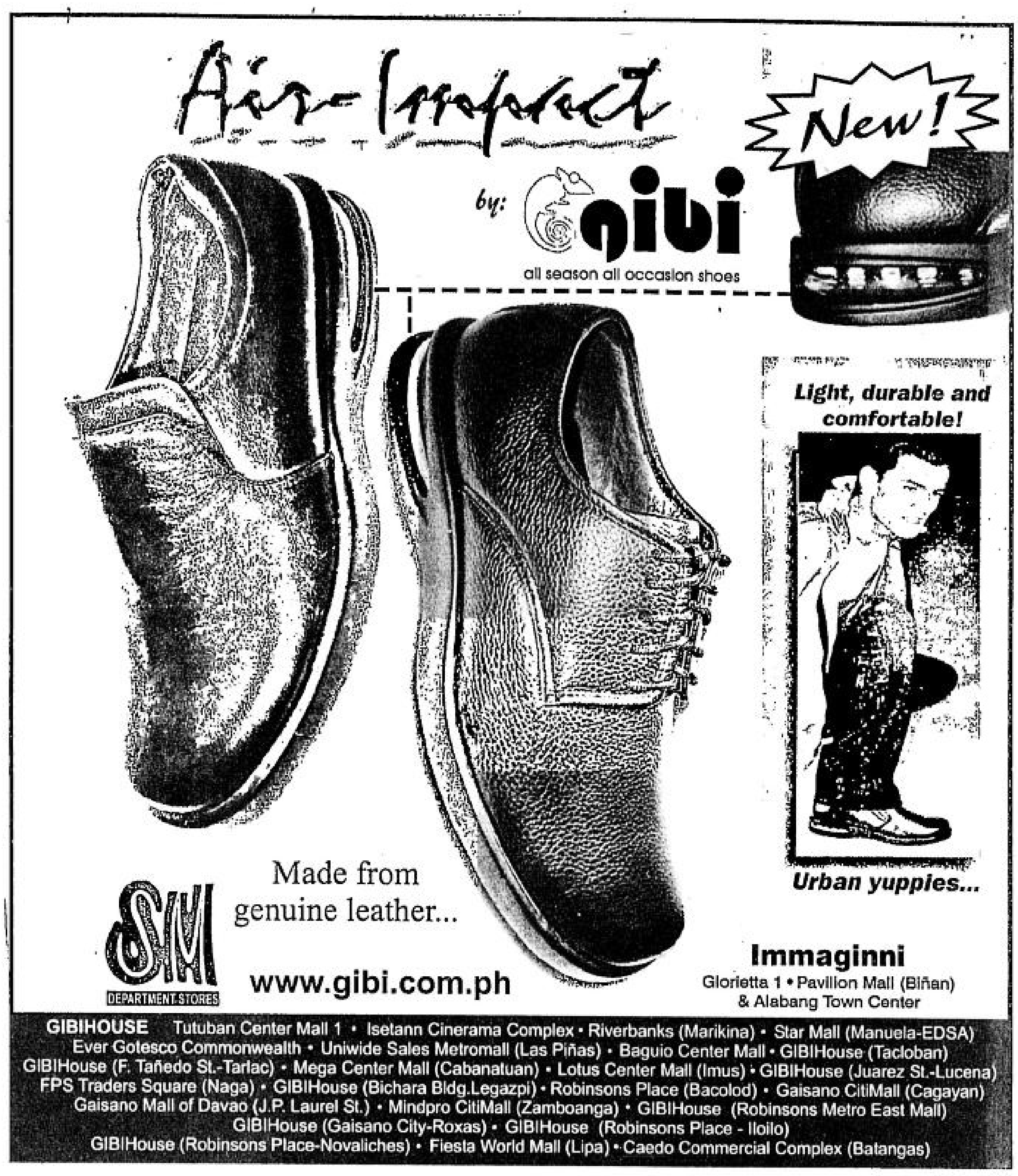
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■ Fake gold bar fetches P1.15M A25

METRO
LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

■ Appeal to GMA: Justice for slain tribal leader A24

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NBI warned on Nida slay case

BY PHILIP C. TUBEZA

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation (NBI) inquiry into the murder of actress Nida Blanca is in danger of going the way of the botched Task Force Marsha.

This warning was sounded yesterday by the lawyers of Rod Strunk, Blanca's husband, as they lambasted the NBI for allegedly portraying their client as Blanca's killer.

The Siguion Reina Law Office also said that Strunk would no longer take the lie detector test that was scheduled for today.

"The investigation is not thorough and it is not impartial when accusations are hurled in the middle of the process and when imputations of bad faith and ill-motivations are ascribed upon witnesses, not upon any solid evidence, but upon mere speculation," the law office said in a four-page statement.

"Mere speculation is not evidence. This case should not be waged in media. It should be resolved by reasonable minds far removed from public glare and pressures of public expectations," the firm said.

"In the end, should the NBI fail to build up a case against Mr. Strunk, will its officers apologize to him? Will they be able to repair the harm and the agony caused him? Will they go the route of Task Force Marsha which, after its case against Mr. Strunk had been demolished, insisted that it had 'other evidence' against him? If so, where is that evidence?" Strunk's lawyers asked.

The lawyers hit back at NBI officials for saying that Strunk made inconsistent statements during his 13-hour interview at the NBI last week, and that an umbrella owned by Strunk was found in the murder site at the Atlanta Centre building in San Juan.

The lawyers also denied that they did most of the talking during the interview.

"While accompanied by his lawyers as is his right, it was he who answered the questions to the full extent of his abilities," the statement said.

"He was grilled for 13 hours, and was composed, cooperative, and enthusiastic in answering all the questions throughout the time. There is no lack of cooperation on the part of Mr. Strunk as the NBI alleges," it added.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco earlier said that Strunk's lawyers would undergo the polygraph test if they continue interfering in their client's interviews.

"And it is neither right nor fair to anchor a person's ability to pass a lie detector test given that the process itself is unreliable, and the results inadmissible in evidence," the law firm said.

NBI WARNED/ A25

STRUNK

WYCOCO

Tantoco passes lie test, but NBI says she's 'inconsistent'

BY PHILIP TUBEZA

NIDA Blanca's best friend Candelaria Tantoco went to the National Bureau of Investigation early yesterday morning and took a lie detector test. She passed it.

But the NBI noted there were still inconsistencies in her statements.

NBI spokesperson Rick Diaz said there are inconsistencies in Tantoco's statements when she was interviewed Monday night, but declined to identify them.

He said Tantoco gave a sworn statement last week, but she had to be interviewed again in light "of new evidence" which the NBI recently unearthed.

Diaz said initial results showed Tantoco passed the polygraph exam she took early yesterday morning. He said Tantoco, Rod Strunk, and Elena dela Paz remain as "material witnesses."

"The initial results showed that she had no reaction indicating deception," Diaz said.

Tantoco went to the bureau about 5:30 a.m. yesterday to avoid reporters. She took the polygraph test about 8:30 a.m. and finished at about 9 a.m.

After the interview, she told waiting reporters that she passed the exam, and maintained that she is not a suspect in Blanca's killing.

Witnesses earlier said that Blanca was seen with a lesbian-look-

TANTOCO/ A25

Afraid of bloody repeat, GMA orders Rizal Day red alert

BY DONA PAZZIBUGAN

MACAPAGAL

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered the Philippine National Police to go on red alert to prevent a repeat of the Dec. 30 bomb attacks last year where at least 17 people were killed and nearly 120 people were injured.

Ms Macapagal said certain groups may want to "commemorate" the Rizal Day anniversary with a new round of bombings.

After nearly a year of investigation, the PNP and the National Bureau of Investigation have still to unmask the culprits.

"I told General Mendoza last night, even (Interior) Secretary (Joey) Lina the day before yesterday, that we should go on red alert because we don't want an anniversary bombing," Ms Macapagal told dzRH in an early morning interview yesterday.

At the height of the impeachment trial of ousted President Joseph Estrada, five bombs hit Metro Manila about noon of Dec. 30, Rizal Day.

Bombs were planted inside a crowded LRT train that exploded in Blumentritt, Sta. Cruz, killing 14 people and injuring at least 60 others; at Plaza Ferguson across the US embassy in Ermita, Manila, where 99 were wounded; inside an EDSAN Transit bus that exploded in Cubao leaving a man dead and 17 injured; at the Centennial Air Cargo warehouse at Naia where 5 men and a woman were wounded; and at a Petron gas station on Edsa corner Pasay Road where two members of the Makati police bomb squad were killed while they were trying to defuse the bomb.

Estrada was initially suspected as wanting to divert the public's attention away from his impeachment case.

But the PNP, then headed by Sen. Panfilo Lacson, filed murder and frustrated murder charges against Moro Islamic Liberation Front officials led by chair Hashim Salamat.

Shortly after Estrada was ousted from office on Jan. 20, Ms Macapagal ordered the National Bureau of Investigation to review the case.

The NBI cleared the MILF of any involvement and the Department of Justice withdrew the charges filed in court.

Armed Forces intelligence services are still holding three Muslim men for their alleged involvement in the bombings.

However, the DOJ has not completed the preliminary investigation of the charges against the suspects.

Metro Manila police chief Director Edgardo Aglipay said more warm bodies will be deployed in Metro Manila and outlying areas to guard airports, oil depots, communications facilities and embassies, ahead of the anniversary of Dec. 30 bombings.

With a report from AP

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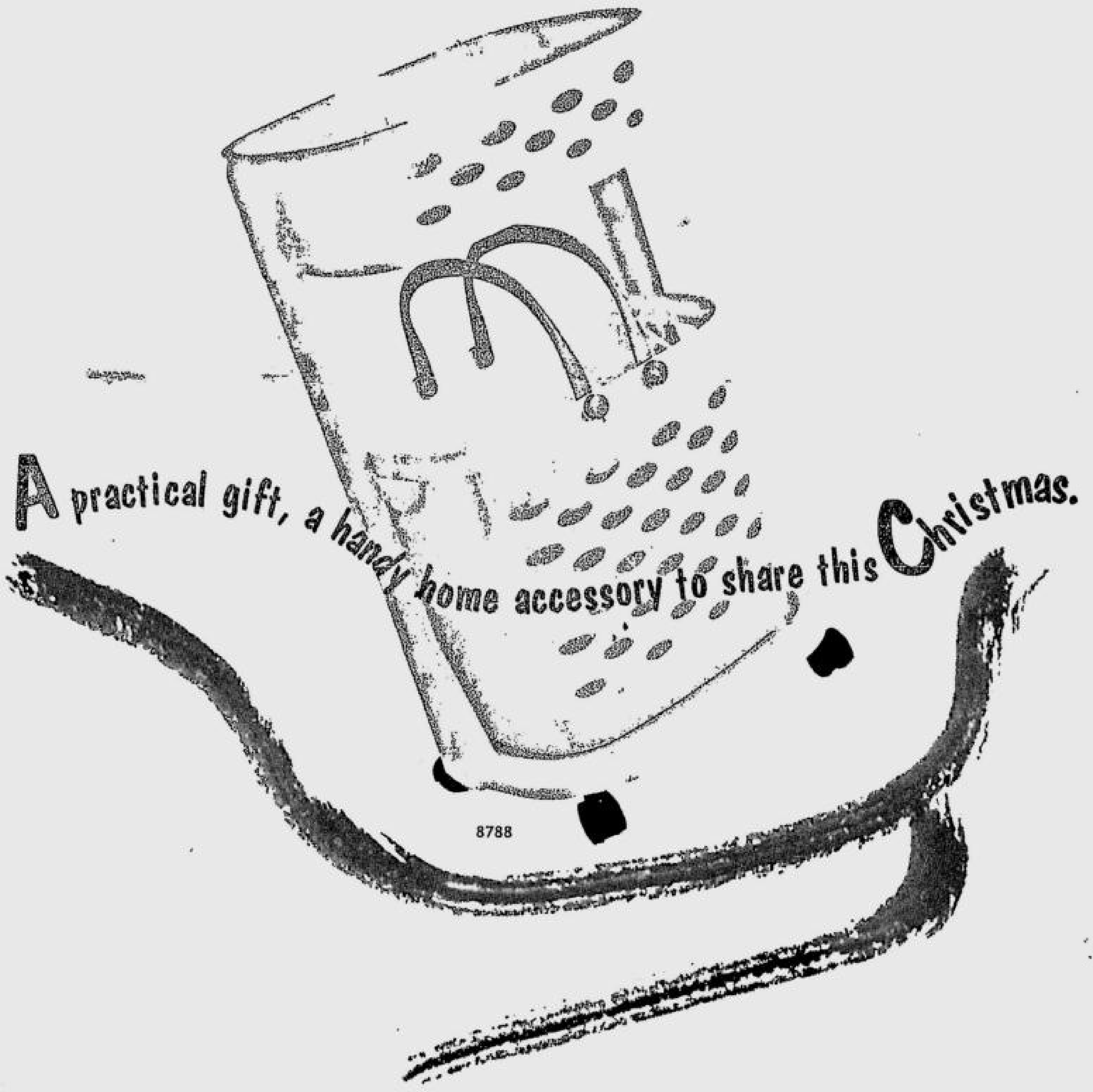
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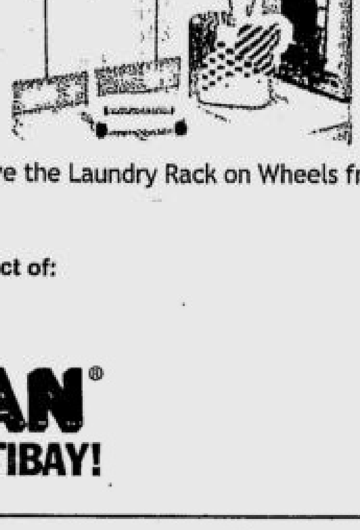

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Cinemanila, a hit, extended until Dec. 24

By Leah Salterio

THE THIRD Cinemanila International Film Festival was huge success and organizers have decided to extend its run up to Dec. 24.

On Sunday night awards for the best films and performances were handed out at Hotel Inter-Continental in Makati.

The Japanese film, "Firefly Dreams," by John Williams, copped the grand prize or the Lino Brocka Award for feature films.

The grand jury prize went to the American film, "Roads and Bridges," directed by Abraham Lim.

Four Filipino male performers were adjudged best actors — Joel Torre, Yul Servo, Arthur Acuña and Ruben Tizon—for Lav Diaz's five-hour movie, "Batang Westside."

Korea's Jung Suh bagged the best actress trophy for "The Isle."

The jury for the feature film category were French film critic Max Tessier (chair), Thai filmmaker Nonzee Nimbutr, Czech Republic film critic Radovan Holub, Filipino film critic Jessica Zafra and French film critic Jacques Poitrat.

The awarding ceremony was attended by Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, whose city is this year's host to Cinemanila. Makati 2nd District Rep. Agapito "Butz" Aquino was also in attendance.

For the Current Asian Cinema category, the jury award went to "Batang Westside."

The jury was composed of Filipino film critics Gino Dormiendo and Noel Vera, with Cinemaya Deputy editor Indu Shrikent as chair.

Mess de Guzman is the winner of the Ishmael Bernal Award for young cinema in the Philippine Independent Cinema and International Short Films category.

Special citation was handed out to "Alab," by Ana Cristina Ganzon and Janis Piopongco.

Best short film award went to the Canadian film, "Sand," by Percy Fuentes.

The jury for the said category were German filmmaker Mirjam Kubescha (chair), with Fil-Am filmmaker David Maquiling and Filipino film critic Nonoy Lauzon.

A special recognition award for career achievement was given to Charlotte Rampling, star of the critically acclaimed French film "Under the Sand."

The awards night was hosted by Eddie Mercado and Alice Dixson. It was attended by actresses Assunta and Alessandra de Rossi, Dina Bonnevie, Ana Capri, actor Albert Martinez and TV/stage director Rowell Santiago.

Featured performers were Robert Seña, Jinky Llamanzares and the cultural group Pinikpikan.

The Third Cinemanila International Film Festival opened at Onstage in Greenbelt in Makati on Dec. 7, with films from 29 countries exhibited at the Glorietta and Greenbelt Cinemas in Makati City.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, the guest of honor, personally welcomed the filmmakers, critics and film producers from different countries. She lauded the event for promoting the country's arts, culture and tourism.

The foreign guests included New Zealand actress Danielle Cormack and Thai filmmaker Nonzee Nimibutr.

Cormack stars in "The Price of Milk," one of the 80 international films which were screened in the festival.

Nimibutr is one of Thailand's most successful directors who is recognized in the international film circuit.

Cinemanila is a project of the Independent Cinema Association of the Philippines, with director Tikoy Aguiluz as founder.

Noted businessman Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala supported Cinemanila by allowing free use of the Greenbelt and Glorietta cinemas for the screening of the movies.

On gala night, Cinemanila gave lifetime achievement awards to three pillars of Philippine cinema—actor-director Eddie Garcia and veteran actresses Gloria Romero and Rosa Rosal.

Special awards were given to actor Jeffrey Quizon for his role in Gil Portes' "Markova: Comfort Gay," which earned for him an acting citation in the Brussels International Film Festival; director Joel Lamangan for bagging the Sylvie Auzas award for "Deathrow" in the Brussels Film Festival; and director Marilou Diaz-Abaya for winning the Fukuoka prize for filmmaking in Japan.

The festival screens feature films, short features and documentaries from 29 participating countries which include Thailand, Turkey, Mexico, Norway, USA, Germany, Czech Republic, Netherlands, Canada, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Japan, Israel, Iran and the Philippines.

MESS de Guzman of Mowelfund (center) is the winner of this year's Ishmael Bernal Award for young cinema in the Philippine Independent Cinema and International Short Films category. The award was presented by actress Assunta de Rossi (left) and Makati 2nd District Rep. Butz Aquino. ERNIE SARMIENTO

Appeal to GMA: Justice for slain tribal leader

By Romulo O. Ponte
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

ANTIPOLO CITY—The family of slain tribal leader Nicanor de los Santos yesterday appealed to President Macapagal-Arroyo to do something about his killers as it accused members of the 2nd Infantry Division in Camp Capinpin, Tanay, Rizal of committing the crime.

The family of De los Santos and their supporters said they would file charges against those responsible for his death.

De los Santos' widow Adelina maintained that her husband was an outstanding father to seven children and a responsible leader to their tribal organization, the Makabayang Samahan ng Katutubong Dumagat sa Rizal (Maskada).

But military authorities claimed in their report that De los Santos was killed in a legitimate encounter between government forces and the New People's Army rebels of which he was allegedly a ranking member.

Adelina cried as she vehemently denied that her husband was a member of the NPA.

"My husband was not an NPA but a leader of the native Dumagats in our community," she said. "The military is only making (up) stories."

The widow said her husband was innocent and described him as a very kind person. She also said the military had no basis for killing him.

A human rights group said De los Santos was among those in the forefront of the struggles against industrial and commercial projects that would endanger the ancestral lands of the natives.

In Calamba City, about 150 Dumagats, displaced Mangyan farmers of Mindoro and militant group leaders in Southern Tagalog will picket in front of the Department of National Defense office in Camp Aguinaldo today to demand the "expulsion of abusive soldiers." They are also seeking the investigation of the murder of De los Santos and the abduction of a female farmer-leader Clarita Regondolaga, of Batangay Cagsiay 3, Mauban in Quezon allegedly by members of the military.

Eden Marcellana, secretary general of Karapatan-Southern Tagalog, told the INQUIRER that with the presence of Party-List Rep. Satur Ocampo, the group would dialogue with Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes.

She said they would urge Reyes to disband military forces from all over Southern Tagalog, which are allegedly often involved in increasing human rights violations against native farmer residents and workers.

Earlier, the group, which included the families of the alleged victims of atrocities, picketed the office of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), Marcellana said.

It urged CHR officials to investigate and give justice to slain tribal leader De los Santos and the recent abduction of farmer-leader Regondolaga.

Regondolaga, a member of farmers group Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid sa Banahaw (KMB), was abducted on Nov. 6 and has remained missing, Marcellana said.

Nancy Rada, spokesperson of Task Force Tanggol Karapatan in the region, said that together with the families of the victims they urged the CHR to speed up its investigation of the murder of De los Santos. They also asked the CHR to investigate other reported atrocities against members of the cultural minorities in the Southern Tagalog Region.

Goodies over glitter

A total of 35,000 poor folks will have the good food on their tables for Noche Buena after they received yesterday buckets of goodies in the traditional 'Pamaskong Handog' project of Mandaluyong City Mayor Benhur Abalos.

Dubbed as the biggest gift-giving event in Metro Manila, if not nationwide, 'Pamaskong Handog' has become the grandest yuletide treat of the Mandaluyong City government to the masses.

"We have toned down on too much glitter and lanterns in favor of thousands of buckets of goodies for our indigents. Pamaskong Handog is our humble gesture of reaching out and extending Christmas joy to our people," said Abalos.

He stressed that for the past three years since he assumed office, he opted to skip buying lavish streetlights and decors to give way to this more important event.

As early as 6 a.m., people started queuing up in Maysilo Circle where the distribution centers and lines were set. Express lanes were also set-up for senior citizens, pregnant women and disabled.

MERRY MAD MIX-UP
Christmas is joy and peace, but the exact opposite happens here in Divisoria where the sun-smelling 'masa' converges in a mad rush to pick up gifts and assorted goodies at bargain prices. The merry, mad mix-up is expected to double in volume and intensity this weekend. ERIK ARAZAS

Here comes another drive vs abusive cabbies, colorums

By Abigail L. Ho
and Norman Bordadora

TRANSPORT officials have announced they will be cracking down hard on colorum public utility vehicles, including FX taxis, and abusive taxi drivers who choose the passengers they take in and charge exorbitant fares.

Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez directed Land Transportation Office chief Edgardo Abenina to take "strict action" against colorum taxis plying Metro Manila streets and other urban areas in the country for aggravating the already heavy traffic situation this holiday.

The continued operation of the "illegal" vehicles is also unfair to legitimate taxi operators who go through the process of acquiring the necessary licenses and permits from the LTO, Alvarez said.

He added that Republic Act 4136, or the Land Transportation and Traffic Code, should be strictly implemented, especially this holiday.

The code directs the LTO to "install and administer a single ticketing system; to fix, impose and collect fines and penalties for all kinds of violations of traffic rules and regulations, whether moving or non-moving in nature; and to confiscate and suspend or revoke drivers' licenses in the enforcement of such traffic laws and regulations."

He reported that the transportation department had received a lot of complaints against colorum FX taxis in the past months. "We cannot allow them to operate as public utility vehicles and risk the safety of our commuting public," Alvarez said. "We also have to protect the interests of legitimate public transport operators."

Criminals are drawn to colorum FX taxis where they commit their offenses because these are difficult.to catch since they have no documents to start a trace.

Alvarez also directed Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) chair Dante Lantin to provide the LTO with a list of duly franchised FX taxis.

Forum for overseas performing artists

OVERSEAS performing artists (OPA), talent managers (TMs), and owners of training centers (TCs) will gather today at the Plaridel Hall of the National Press Club for a forum sponsored by the "Save the Training Centers/Talent Managers Sector Crusade." Main agenda is the controversial Department Order (DO) 10 issued by the Department of Labor and Employment (Dole) on the overseas entertainment industry, and Memorandum Circular (MC) 15 from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA). "DO 10 practically abolished the TM/TC sector," the Crusade said. "It is arbitrary, whimsical, oppressive and patently biased against the TM/TX sector."

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, December 19, 2001
3rd Week of Advent

1st Reading: **Jdg 13:2-7, 24-25**
Gospel: **Lk 1:5-25**

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there lived a priest named Zechariah, belonging to the priestly clan of Abiah. Elizabeth, Zechariah's wife, also belonged to a priestly family. Both of them were upright in the eyes of God and lived blamelessly in accordance with all the laws and commands of the Lord, but they had no child. Elizabeth could not have any and now they were both very old.

Now, while Zechariah and those with him were fulfilling their office, it fell to him by lot, according to the custom of the priests, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense. At the time of offering incense all the people were praying outside; it was then that an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. On seeing the angel, Zechariah was deeply troubled and fear took hold of him.

But the angel said to him, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah, be assured that your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son and you shall name him John. He will bring joy and gladness to you and many will rejoice at his birth.

This son of yours will be great in the eyes of the Lord. Listen: he shall never drink wine or strong drink, but he will be filled with holy spirit even from his mother's womb. Through him many of the people of Israel will turn to the Lord their God. He himself will open the way to the Lord with the spirit and power of the prophet Elijah; he will reconcile fathers and children, and lead the disobedient to wisdom and righteousness, in order to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I believe this? I am an old man and my wife is elderly, too." The angel replied, "I am Gabriel, who stand before God, and I am the one sent to speak to you and bring you this good news! My words will come true in their time. But you would not believe and now you will be silent and unable to speak until this has happened."

Meanwhile the people waited for Zechariah, and they were surprised that he delayed so long in the sanctuary. When he finally appeared, he could not speak to them and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He remained dumb and made signs to them.

When his time of service was completed, Zechariah returned home and some time later Elizabeth became pregnant. For five months she kept to herself, remaining at home, and thinking, "What is the Lord doing for me! This is his time for mercy and for taking away my public disgrace."

Commentary

Luke begins his Gospel with the announcement of the birth of John the Baptist. This is the moment of history's rupture, a turning point, the beginning of God's new course of action. The first turning point happened precisely in the Temple, where the people have always wanted to control and restrain God. The Holy of Holies was no more than a prison cell where God's power was intended to be suppressed, a place that was deemed dangerous to people. Sacrifices were offered outside to appease God's wrath. At the first chance however, God escapes from his golden captivity, and the first thing He does is to create life. The child born of a couple, too old and incapable of child-bearing, would be the first sign of the history of the kingdom that was about to begin.

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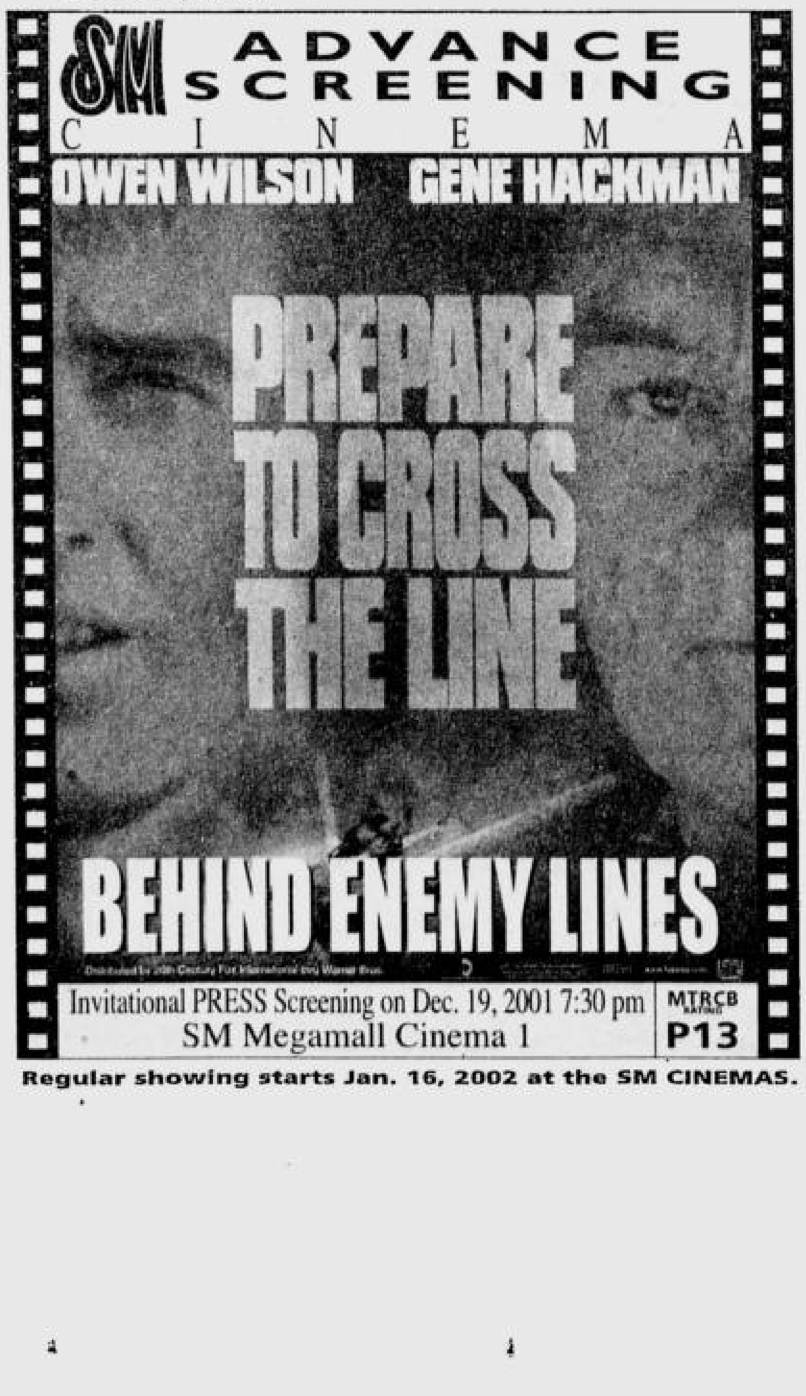

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Manila dad: Out with Pasinos

By Jerome Aning

THE MANILA City Council's minority leader yesterday called for the relief of the Western Police District commander because of the latter's "unsatisfactory performance" in fighting crime and disciplining his men.

Councilor Don Ramon Bagatsing of the fourth district said the performance of WPD director Chief Supt. Nicolas Pasinos Jr., who has been in office for barely eight months, "fell short of the expectations" of many councilors.

Bagatsing said the murder of a Sta. Mesa barangay chief and elections officer Velma Cinco, as well as the rising number of robberies and other petty crimes, reflected Pasinos' poor performance.

Bagatsing said this is the reason why majority councilor Julio Logarta Jr. of the sixth district wanted to allow civilians to bear arms so they can defend themselves, their loved ones and property.

"Although Councilor Logarta's move is quite radical, it speaks clearly of the WPD's unsatisfactory performance in crime-fighting under General Pasinos," Bagatsing told reporters.

The councilor also chided Pasinos for allowing the Manila's Finest brotherhood association to "gain influence" when the organization vigorously opposed the new disciplinary rules ordered by Metro Manila police chief Director Edgardo Aglipay.

The councilor said Pasinos "showed lack of leadership" when the WPD chief permitted the MFBA—composed of policemen ranked SPO4 and below—to bypass him and take their concerns directly to Aglipay.

"Being the district commander, he should have been able to quell the dissent from the start," but Pasinos allowed the controversy to reach key police officials, Bagatsing said.

"All he had to do was to implement the new rules whether they like it or not," he added.

The alderman said WPD lawmen have been "spoiled for many years that they have acquired the audacity to question their superiors."

Bagatsing said he supports the imposition of the new rules, which include daily morning formations.

Aglipay ordered policemen to be transferred to the provinces if they are absent or late in the roll call, or report in incomplete uniform, for a specific number of times and without valid excuse.

PASINOS

The Inquirer tried to call Pasinos for comment, but was told that the police official was busy supervising yesterday's Christmas party for WPD policemen.

Fake gold bar fetches P1.15M

By Philip C. Tubeza

CHRISTMAS is near, but even gold could have a false glitter.

The Manila police nabbed one of two brothers who duped a Korean national into giving them P1.15 million in exchange for a fake gold bar in Manila.

Jung Pil Yoon, 59, currently billeted at La Coronas Hotel, 1166 M.H. Del Pilar corner Arquiza St. Ermita, Manila, accused brothers James, 41, and Jessie Barcelona, both of M.H. del Pilar Compound, Barangay dela Paz, Antipolo City, of duping him, said Detective Vicente Noriega, of the Western Police District General Assignment Section.

Yoon said he gave the brothers $23,000 in exchange for a gold bar but the two siblings were not able to produce a trace of the fabled gold.

He asked for help from the police, who found James behind bars at the WPD Theft and Robbery section. He had been arrested for swindling, Noriega said.

Yoon said the victim met the two brothers at the Mandarin Hotel in September. They allegedly promised him a 24 karat gold bar, weighing 6.2 kilograms.

The suspects sweet-talked Yoon into agreeing to the deal. The victim said he gave the two brothers $23,000 on Oct. 10 at the La Corona Hotel in Ermita.

Yoon presented to the police a receipt of the $23,000, which was signed by Jessie.

"Actually, it was James who received the money. But they told me not to worry because they said they were not going to fool me," Yoon said.

He said the two men told him that he would have the gold by Dec. 15 because they were going to get the bar from Hong Kong. The $23,000 was allegedly for "mobilization travel expenses."

But Dec. 15 came and went but the fabled gold did not materialize. The suspects then claimed that the money Yoon gave was not enough, Noriega said.

"Starting that day (Dec. 15), I began telling them to return the money until James promised to return it on Monday," Yoon said.

But when Yoon and his girlfriend Corazon Raganit went to the brothers' office at Room 303 San Carlos Mansion, Ermita, Manila, the two men were nowhere to be found.

They then went to the police and discovered that James had been arrested for swindling after he allegedly got involved in a "Budol-budol" scheme.

Detective Ed Moran showed the Inquirer a photo of Jessie, who is still at large and is now the subject of a police manhunt.

NBI warned on Nida slay case

(From page A23)

The law firm said it advised Strunk not to take the exam since the result of the test "is not evidence."

"Should Mr. Strunk pass the test, does this mean the NBI will 'clear him.' From all indications, it will not. On the other hand, should Mr. Strunk fail the test, can the NBI charge him? No, but the agency will evidently capitalize upon it to convict him in the forum of public opinion or, worse, use it as an excuse to abandon equally, if not more, credible leads in this case,'' it said.

The law firm also emphasized that Strunk only came out once of their White Plains home on the night Blanca was killed.

It said that Strunk left around 3 a.m. and that it was another party who used his van to leave the subdivision later.

"It is not fair to accuse any witness of inconsistency in his testimony because the completion of the investigation may negate this accusation. It is not right to complain that a witness has been defensive or evasive, or that he has lied based on mere perception," the firm said.

Strunk's lawyers also hit the disclosure that their client owns the umbrella used to stab Blanca.

"The disclosure is baseless, unfair and malicious because it assumes the umbrella, if there is one, 'belongs' to Mr. Strunk and-even worse, directly implies, if not accuses, him of using it to murder his wife," the firm said.

But an NBI inventory showed that the bureau had two umbrellas found at the crime scene, one was blood-stained and the other had a broken handle.

"There is no evidence that Mr. Strunk stands to benefit from Nida Blanca's death. There is no evidence that he had any participation in her death. There is no evidence to show that he does not wish to have the case justly resolved," the firm said.

"Why is the NBI publicly airing questions and statements that suggest otherwise? Let the investigation be completed. If, from the evidence gathered in the investigation, there is basis to charge any person, let this be done," it said.

"The fact of the matter is that the NBI obviously doubted Mr. Strunk's innocence from the beginning as its consistent and relentless effort to tag him as a 'suspect' proves. Mr. Strunk had requested the NBI for protection, a reasonable request given that some unknown parties had obviously orchestrated charges against him. The request was denied," the firm added.

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DAMAYAN SA KABUHAYAN

Ruben C. de Lara, TSPI executive director, hands over an insurance policy to a TSPI client during the recent product launching of the Damayan sa Kabuhayan at the TSPI head office in Makati. Damayan 2001 offers 35,000 clients under the TSPI Kabuhayan Program a micro-insurance facility. In photo from left are Elmo Nobleza, Cocolife first vice president, lawyer Alfredo Tumacder Jr., Cocolife president, Dr. Olivia Pascual, TSPI board of trustees, Amy de los Santos, TSPI director for Field Operations, Joyce Galang, Cocolife assistant vice president and'Jesila Ledesma, TSPI assistant director for Social and Business Development Services.

Tantoco passes ...

(From page A23)

ing woman at the Casino Filipino between 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. on Nov. 7, the night the actress was murdered.

The witnesses' description of Blanca's companion matched Tantoco's features "95 percent up," according to authorities.

An NBI source said Tantoco was not detained because they were still "trying to tie up some loose ends."

Diaz said radio reporter Red Cruz, Dela Paz's relative, might also be asked to undergo a polygraph test.

Investigators interviewed three of Dela Paz's other relatives, who went to the NBI headquarters late yesterday afternoon.

Diaz also said that NBI agents interviewed over the weekend two acquaintances of ex-soldier Meliton Vizcaya, the man who claimed that two women tried to hire him to kill an old actress.

He said the field agents were trying to verify Vizcaya's statements, adding that the ex-soldier may become a witness if his statements are corroborated.

This space was provided by Philippine Daily Inquirer, a Corporate Partner of WWF-Philippines. PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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FOREVER FLAWLESS

Apart from making movies and hosting GMA 7's "Startalk" on Saturdays, actress and bold icon Rosanna Roces recently tried her hand at business. She opened her facial and skin care clinic, Forever Flawness, at the 5th level of SM Megamall Building B. The shop offers affordable facial, body massage, skin peeling, whitening and other services. The specialists are trained under Dr. Vicki Belo.

Wistful comedy by Fil-Am filmmaker

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

"DISORIENTED," one of the movies shown here during the 2001 Cinemanila international filmfest, is a movie made by Filipino-American **Francisco Aliwalas**, who hopes to get the film shown commercially here sometime soon.

The film has done well in festivals in the States, but it hasn't broken into the mainstream circuit there because of its specialized subject matter.

It's about a Filipino-American boy (played by Aliwalas himself) who comes of age even as his confused family comes to grips with their American Dream.

"Disoriented" has won the Jean Renoir Storytelling Award at the Huntington Film Festival, and has also gotten some good reviews. But it seems that this isn't enough to get US distributors interested in showing the film commercially, beyond the limited festival circuit.

So, its producers are trying to get it shown here first. To make it easier for local distributors, bookers and theater owners to appreciate the movie's commercial possibilities here, we're sharing more details about it and its makers than would be ordinarily available in festival brochures.

Filmmaker Francisco Aliwalas arrived in the States from the Philippines with his physician-parents when he was only two years old.

In his own words: "I grew up thinking of myself as a typical all-American boy—hot dogs, baseball, Tom Sawyer. I didn't start to recognize an Asian face in the mirror until some 20 years later. The song, language, religion and history of my ancestors was returning like a long-lost memory."

Later, Aliwalas realized that "I'd have to balance my new Asian reality with my old American dreams."

Luckily, he had by then studied filmmaking, so he was able to share his insights with viewers. "Disoriented" is the result of his long immersion in himself, and in the two cultures that "hyphenated" young people like him inhabit.

But he points out, "We made 'Disoriented' to confront issues of identity not just for Asian-American, but also for anyone finding himself caught between his public mask and private face.

"In our film, Filipino-American West Cordova switches between different personalities: from harried Chinese Delivery Boy to honorable Pre-Med student, from Super Surgeon to Sushi Chef—even transforming from an everyday hero to an unexpected heroine!

"The film has fun poking at American pop icons and stretching Asian stereotypes . . . And, at the center of these swirling forces pulling West eastward and westward stands his mother—a force of nature in herself.

"What Mom has in mind for him (a medical degree) versus what he has in mind (if only he could make up his mind!) is the problem that he must resolve. Sound familiar? I made this film for anyone who has ever had a mother!"

Sounds like fun, doesn't it? We can see local viewers warming up to this Fil-American tale. After all, there are literally millions of Filipinos living in the States, and even more millions dreaming of doing that, too. And we all have relatives in the US, so many of us would be interested in the Fil-Am conundrum that this movie tries to unravel, in its own light, breezy fashion.

So, is there a distributor, booker or theater owner out there who is interested in helping this movie connect with local viewers? For additional incentive, the film doesn't concentrate exclusively on West and his super-mother.

Other interesting and instructive characters include his Japanese girlfriend who has a fetish for blonde hair and big, round, occidental eyes, and West's jock brother who reappears, after some years, as a transvestite!

Reviews: **David Hunter** in The Hollywood Reporter—"A light, multicul-tural comedy with a Filipino-American spin. 'Disoriented' has a disarming quality that won over viewers when it unspoiled at the USA Film Festival. Fairly conventional, but briskly paced, unpretentious and nicely realized. Plus: fine performances, a couple of goofy dream sequences, and few dull moments."

Kevin Thomas in the Los Angeles Times—"As a first-time writer-director, Francisco Aliwalas has a deft touch in this wistful comedy."

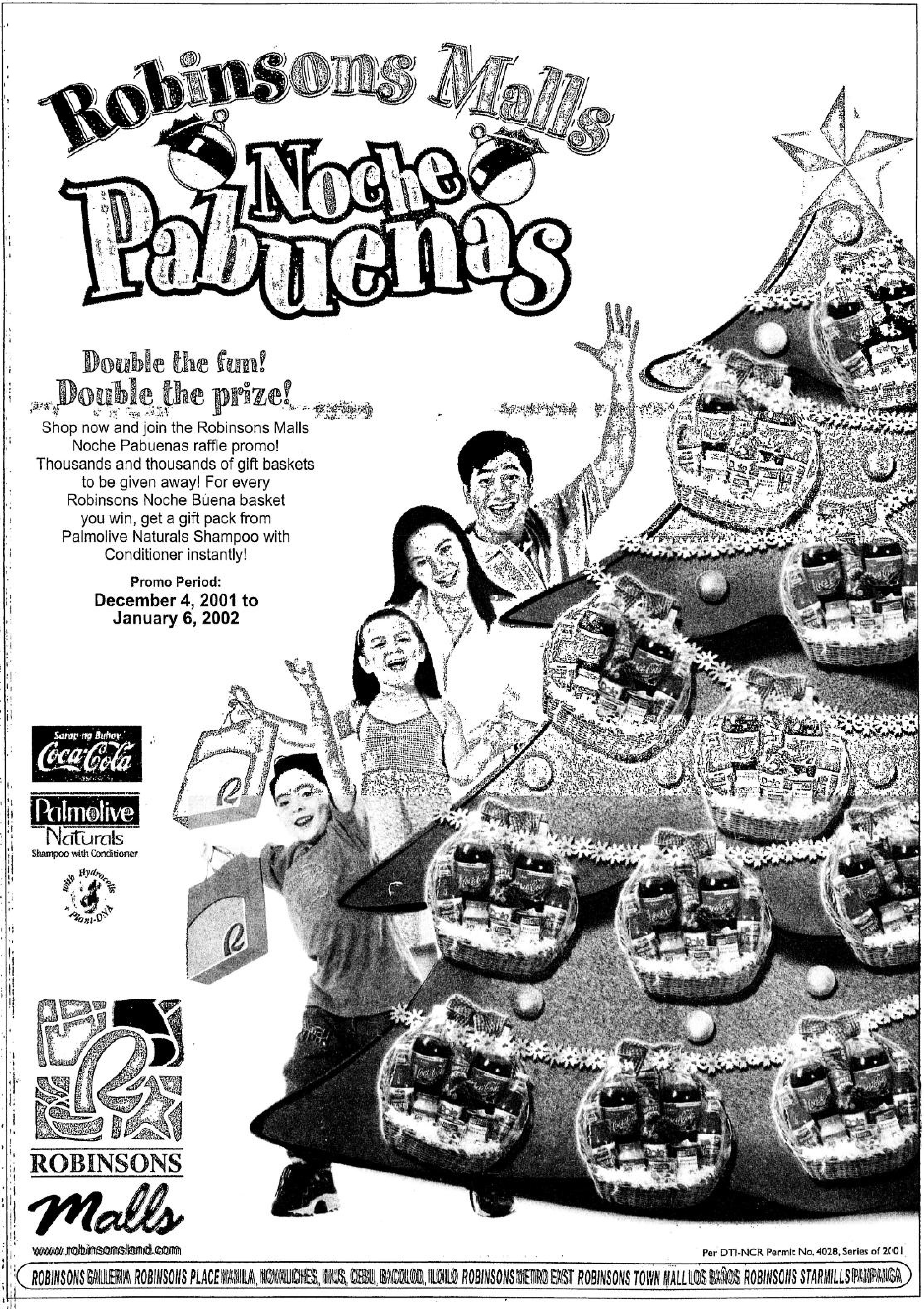
Enough said!

'Making Spirits Bright'

JOEY'S new Christmas album, "Making Spirits Bright," starts with guitarist **Lee Ritenour**'s rendition of "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," followed by **Will Downing**'s R&B version of "I'll Be Home for Christmas, and guitarist **Joyce Cooling** performing the classic "The Christmas Song."

Other cuts: saxophonist **Gerald Albright** in "This Christmas." **Al Jarreau** with "Silent Night." **March Antoine** in "what Child Is This?"

"God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" is performed by **Richard Elliot**, "Jingle Bells" by **Diana Krall**, "Here Comes Santa Claus" by **Jeff Golub**, "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus" by **Joe Sample**, and "E Nuestra Navidad" by **Dave Grusin**.



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G learns practical living in New York

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

LIVING in the States has been a humbling and at the same time enriching experience for actress **Giselle Toengi**. She was in New York for 10 months, where she learned to do everything herself, including cooking, her manicure and pedicure, laundry and even her own makeup.

"No one was doing it for me so I was forced to learn everything," G says. "I ruined so many clothes which I attempted to wash in the washing machine. But eventually, I learned how to do it the correct way. I can't bring every dress to the dry cleaners because it would be so expensive. I also learned how to cook *salpicao* and *adobo.*"

G has an apartment in Manhattan near St. Patrick's Cathedral. She learned how to use the subway and forgot about her celebrity lifestyle in Manila.

"I'm not a show biz star there but a starving actor," G says. "When I want to eat a tuna sandwich and I saw it costs $9, I would go look for another deli which sells it cheaper.

"Living in New York has taught me so many things, like patience, humility and perseverance. I realized you couldn't bring your standard of lifestyle here to New York. It's impossible unless you're a millionaire."

Even in shopping, G has learned to be practical.

"If I used to shop here a lot, I minimized my shopping there. I only bought what I really needed. I used to go with the trend in fashion, but while in the States, I didn't see it to be a wise thing to do.

"I don't mean to be a penny-pincher because I'm not. But you can't survive in the States if you don't have a stable job."

BONNEVIE. The only choice for the role of Lupe in Tickoy Aguiluz's "Tatarin."

The best part, however, was her acting training. G completed the Meisner course prepared by acting guru **Standford Meisner**, whom she says, was one of the legendary theater teachers.

"It's technique acting and it teaches you how to react in the scenes and the ability to live truthfully given imaginary circumstance," she informs. "Here in Manila, I took the Actors' Workshop under **Leo Martinez**. I didn't really have any formal training in an acting school.

"In New York, I learned everything from Greek theater to **Neil Simon** plays, things that I wouldn't have had the opportunity to learn if I was here. I'm excited to use the technique anywhere if there's an opportunity for me."

The training probably made her hungry for more acting experience, so that G also plans to take up method acting at the **Lee Strassberg** School when she returns to New York in February. The school has produced such Hollywood acting greats as **Robert de Niro** and **Al Pacino**.

In New York, G also dropped the "e" from her name and uses Tongi in her audition resumes.

"That's really how it's spelled and it should be pronounced 'tong-gi'," she explains. "But when I was starting out, Martin kept on saying 'ton-ji,' so everyone started saying it the same way. We only added the 'e' then."

G auditioned for the role of Elektra in Regency Pictures' upcoming production based on Daredevil Comics, with **Ben Affleck** in the lead.

"After the audition, I got a bonus because I saw Hollywood couple **Reese Witherspoon** and **Ryan Phillipe,**" she shares.

She also read for a part in Warner Bros.' production of "Constantine."

"Even Madonna had to audition for 'Evita,'" G says. "In the States, you live, breathe and act. It's a never-ending thing. Here, it's just a job."

At Cavehaz at the Mercer Hotel in the Soho district, G performs at the Tuesday Club on Tuesday nights. She does cuts from her first solo album and a few OPM tunes. Covers, she says, are not so much encouraged.

G also performs at Cutting Room in the Chelsea district. The place is owned by "Sex and the City" actor **Chris Noth**.

At 23, G believes that all her hard work and struggle in New York will eventually yield good results. She does not regret having to leave local show biz and settle in New York. And even if some skeptics are frowning on her decision, G remains optimistic.

"This is the direction I want to pursue," G allows. "How can it not work if I'm learning in the process? If I do or if I don't, what matters is what I learn in between. Just because I'm here now doesn't mean I'm giving up. I want to be able to try to break through."

G takes a much-needed break before she plunges into more serious decisions next year. She is now in Manila and will spend the holidays with her mom, her half-brother **John** and his family in Cavite. On Christmas day, she will visit her godmother in Tagaytay City.

She is now billeted at Discovery Suites, where she will host a New Year party-concert.

"This is what I miss in Manila, the perks," G smiles.

Dina goes period

IS IT true that **Dina Bonnevie** was a headache during the location shoot of **Tikoy Aguiluz**'s "Tatarin," in Laguna?

Dina reportedly gave the production team a hard time because she refused to shoot in a squalid area, which was needed as backdrop for a particular scene in the movie.

But Dina's manager, **Arnold Vegafria**, comes to the defense of his talent and denies the scuttlebutt.

"Any actress would feel tired if she was asked to report on the set at 6 a.m. and she gets to face the cameras for her first take at 5 a.m. the next day," Arnold says. "Dina refused to shoot because they made her wait for almost 24 hours. And it was not even a comfortable area. But it's not true that she acted like a VIP on the set and gave the others a hard time."

Save for that intrigue, Dina went on to film "Tatarin" without any hitch. She goes period in the role of Lupe, the mistress of the Moreta mansion who defies the conservative society of the '20s. She is meek and mild, ever obedient and subservient to her husband Paeng (**Edu Manzano**). But underneath is a woman of seething passion, which explodes during the "Tatarin" procession.

Dina was said to be the only choice for the role of Lupe. Under the Viva banner, Dina made some of her most memorable films which include **Leroy Salvador**'s "Tinik sa Dibdib," **Eddie Garcia**'s "Magdusa Ka" and **Lino Brocka**'s "Gumapang Ka sa Lusak" and "Sa Kabila ng Lahat."

Like the **Nick Joaquin** heroine, Dina says her similarity to her character onscreen is that she loves well, but not too wisely. She is a slave to the man she loves, "but only up to a point."

Dina says she knows when to say enough is enough, like what Lupe did in "Tatarin," where she reduces her domineering husband into a groveling wimp.

"Tatatin" is Viva Films' official entry to the MMFF. The outfit spared no time, effort and money in making the film its biggest production in its 20-year history.

The project was particularly challenging to production designer **Dez Bautista** and cinematographer **Ely Cruz**, who turned portions of Malolos and Intramuros into the '20s.

TONGI, not Toengi. Living in the Big Apple has taught her so many things.

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SUMMER CATCH - P 13 12:50, 3:20, 5:40, 7:55, 10:10	RUSH HOUR 2 - P 13 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15, 9:30	THE SCORE - R 18 11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00

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Regal continues horror-thriller tradition with 'Bahay ni Lola'

AWARD-WINNING actress Glorai Romero leads the powerhouse cast of "Bahay ni Lola," Regal Entertainment's entry to this year's Metro Manila Film Festival, directed by Uro de la Cruz.

Romero plays "lola" in the film, but her character is entirely different from her award-winning role in last year's festival topgrosser, "Tanging-Yaman."

Joining Gloria in the scary yet family-oriented opus is award-winning actress and director, Gina Alajar, with child sensation of the '80s and now a multi-platinum singer and hitmaker, Aiza Seguerra and versatile artist Manilyn Reynes, who's a veteran in doing horror movies.

"Bahay ni Lola" also stars some of the top young stars today led by James Blanco who is a mainstay of "IKaw Lang ang Mamahalin," "Sa Dako Pa Roon," "Click" and "SOP;" Miko Sotto and Maybeline de la Cruz of "Click;" Maxene Magalona and talentend tyke Isabella de Leon of "Daddy Di Do Doo."

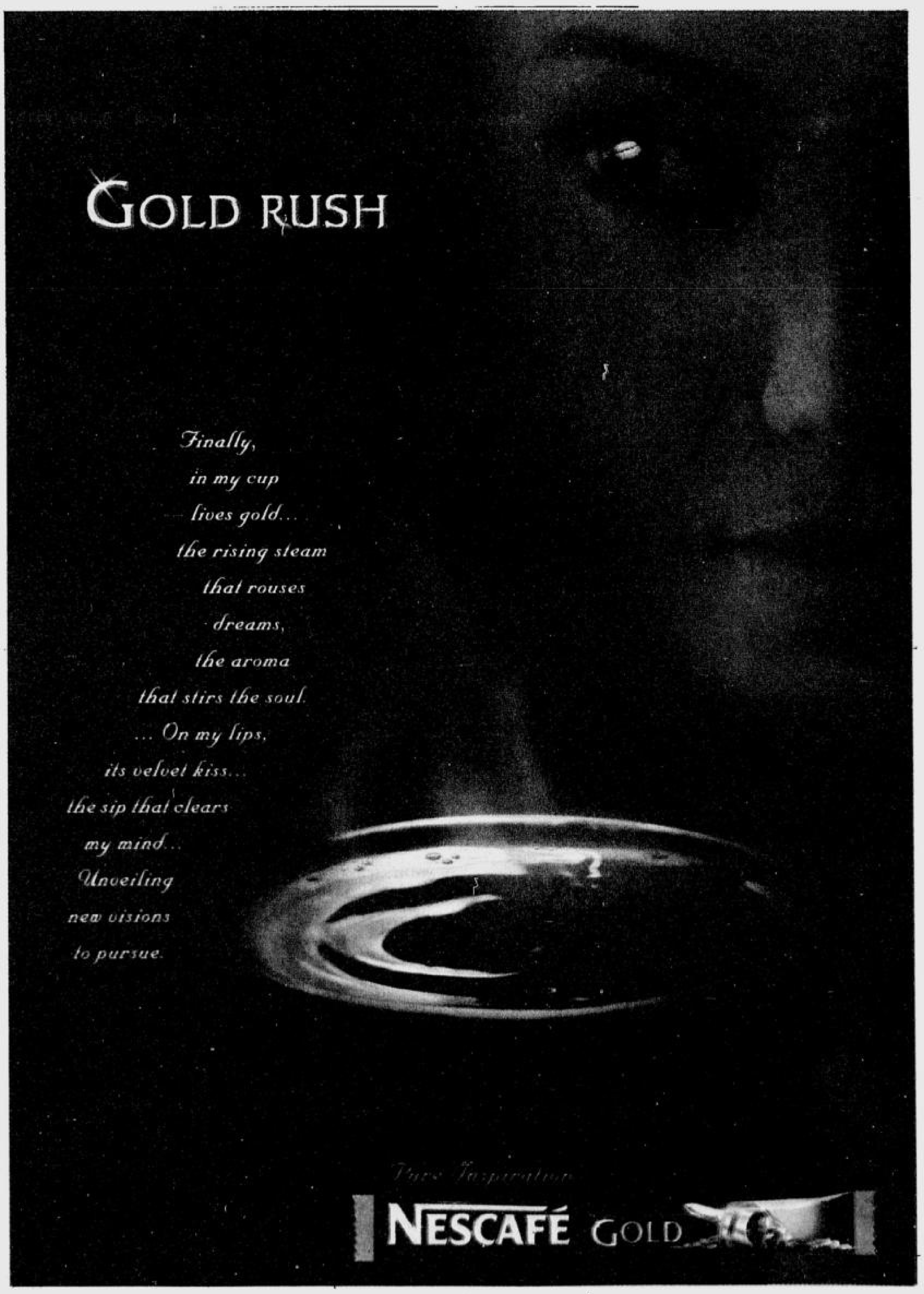
Providing fun and laughter in the film is singer-comedian Allan K, who gets his biggest break in this movie. His comic flair is showcased regularly on TV's "Eat Bulaga" and "Sing-Galing."

"Bahay ni Lola" continues Regal's tradition of providing pure entertainment to the movie-going public on Christmas season. In the past, Regal offered thrillers like the "Shake, Rattle and Roll" series and its recent entry, "Sa Piling ng mga Aswang."

Regal matriarch Lily Monteverde chose to field another horror film focusing on the solidarity of the Filipino family in times of hardships and crisis.

Complete with special effects and spine-tingling music, "Bahay ni Lola" caters to all types of audience who loves a scary flick.

PROVIDING scary thrills in "Bahay ni Lola." (from left) Gina Alajar, Manilyn Reynes, Gloria Romero, Isabela de Leon and Aiza Seguerra.



‘Recall Nights’ at Strumm’s

105.1 Crossover once again treats its loyal listeners to another rousing party, “Recall Nights,” 9 tonight at Strumm’s Makati.

It will be an evening filled with favorite ’70s tunes, with Fat Session rendering the hits of great artists like Hues Corporation, Stylistics, 5th Dimension, Spinners, Friends of Distinction and many more.

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GLORIETTA 4

1	MONSTERS, INC.	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	THE SCORE	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	SUMMER CATCH THX	In DSD/SDDS/DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	BEST OF CINEMANILA 2001 Art Film	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	MVP: MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
6	HARRY POTTER	In DTS/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
7	ROCKSTAR	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

GREENBELT

1	BEST OF CINEMANILA 2001	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
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6	VIVID

Baclaran LRT
LRT CINEMA
tel 512.0115

1 (DOLBY)	
2	

Berma
tel 879.2029

1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
2	NAIIBANG HAYOP

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	
2	

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
2	MVP
3 (DTS)	SUMMER CATCH

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	MVP
2 (DTS)	GLITTER
3 (DOLBY)	HARRY POTTER
4	SUMMER CATCH

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	MVP
2 (DOLBY)	GLITTER
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
4	SUMMER CATCH

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	IRON LADIES
2	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
3	SOON TO OPEN
4	SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 MovieTown
(Tarlac)

1	THE SCORE
2	ROCKSTAR
3 (DOLBY)	TIKIM
4 (DTS)	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
2	NAIIBANG HAYOP
3	VIVID
4 (DTS)	MAGIC DRAGON BALL

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	EARTHQUAKE
2	MVP
3 (DTS)	SUMMER CATCH
4	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
5	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	BAKIT DI TOTOHANIN
2	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
3	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249-2558

1	BAKIT DI TOTOHANIN
2	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
3	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	TALONG
2	ROSARIO 13
3	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	EARTHQUAKE
2	MVP
3	

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
2 (DTS)	

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
2	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
3	

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

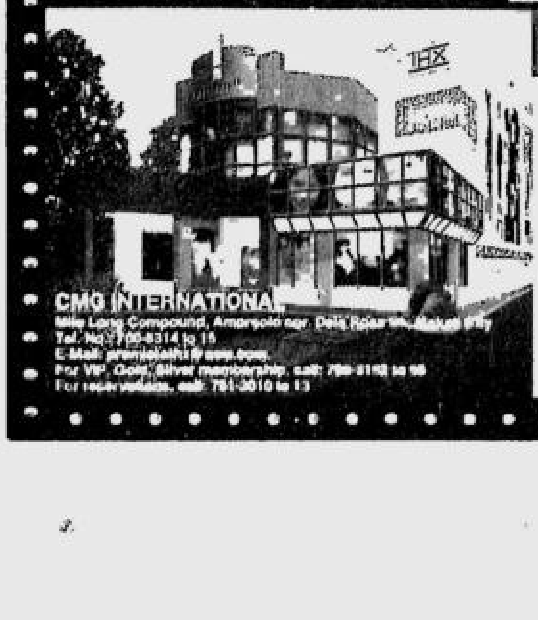
1	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
2	CAPT. CORRELLI'S
3	ROCKSTAR
4	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	MUSKETEER
2	THE SCORE
3	JOY RIDE
4 (DTS ES)	GLADIATOR

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS



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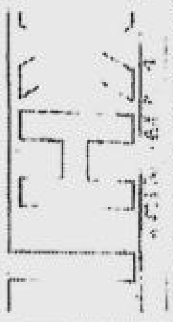
GALLERIA
633-0115-16 / 633-7041 loc. 279

1	HARRY POTTER
2	MONSTER, INC.
3	THE SCORE
4	WOLF GIRL
5	SUMMER CATCH
6	EARTHQUAKE
7	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
8	MUSKETEER
9	SPY KIDS
10	PAGDATING NG PANAHON



ERMITA
536-7809 TO 12

1	SUMMER CATCH
2	WOLF GIRL
3	THE SCORE
4	FERDINANDO CAROLINA
5	EARTHQUAKE
6	HARRY POTTER
7	MUSKETEER

METRO EAST
632-0115-16 / 633-7041

1	SPY KIDS
2	HARRY POTTER
3	THE SCORE
4	MONSTERS, INC.
5	MUSKETEER
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7	SUMMER CATCH
8	PISNGI

NOVALICHES
936-3229 TO 31

1	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
2	SUMMER CATCH
3	WOLF GIRL
4	WOLF GIRL
5	EARTHQUAKE
6	MUSKETEER
7	HARRY POTTER
8	MONSTERS, INC.

IMUS
(046) 471-0199

1	HARRY POTTER
2	EARTHQUAKE
3	SUMMER CATCH
4	MONSTERS, INC.
5	MUSKETEER
6	WOLF GIRL

BACOLOD
(034) 441-0453 / 0456

1	HARRY POTTER
2	MUSKETEER
3	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
4	JOY RIDE
5	DON'T SAY A WORD
6	CAPT. CORRELLI'S

ILOILO
(033) 336- 9077 / 9078

1	HARRY POTTER
2	ROCKSTAR
3	TIKIM
4	IRON LADIES
5	JEEPERS CREEPERS
6	JEEPERS CREEPERS

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101

ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	SUTLA (RE-ISSUE)
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	MUSKETEER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	HARRY POTTER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	EARTHQUAKE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	MVP
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7(DOLBY)	SUMMER CATCH
FARMERS PLAZA-1(DOLBY)	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
FARMERS PLAZA-2(DOLBY)	PISNGI
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	MARITAL RAPE / EROTIC DIARIES
ODEON	EARTHQUAKE
ODEON-2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
ROBEN	PISNGI
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	PUKYUTAN / STORY OF US

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
REMAR	PISNGI
REMAR-2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	NAIIBANG HAYOP
B	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-2	SUMMER CATCH

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	ROCKSTAR
CINEMA-2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
CINEMA-3	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	THE SCORE
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	MONSTER, INC.
CINEMA-6	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
CINEMA-7	SUTLA (RI)
CINEMA-8	PISNGI
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SUMMER CATCH
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	EARTHQUAKE
CINEMA-12	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
CINEMA-14	MUSKETEER
CINEMA-15	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

LORES

CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED

POWER PLANT CINEMA

CINEMA-1	THE MUSKETEER
CINEMA-2	MONSTERS, INC.
CINEMA-3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-4	SUMMER CATCH
CINEMA-5	RUSH HOUR 2
CINEMA-6	THE SCORE

UNIWIDE METROMALL

(LAS PIÑAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARAÑAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

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1	MUSKETEER
2	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
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5	WOLF GIRL
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7	BOLD AFFAIR
8	FIREBALL JACK

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1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	FIREBALL JACK
3	HARRY POTTER
4	EARTHQUAKE
5	MUSKETEER
6	WOLF GIRL
7	SUMMER CATCH
8	PEARL HARBOR
9	THE SCORE
10	ALIPIN NG TUKSO

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
2	ROCKSTAR
3	CLOSED
4	HARRY POTTER
5	MUSKETEER
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7	SUMMER CATCH
8	THE SCORE
9	EARTHQUAKE
10	CLOSED
11	PEARL HARBOR
12	WOLF GIRL

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1	ROCK STAR
2	THE SCORE
3	MONSTERS, INC.
4	SUMMER CATCH
5	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
6	HARRY POTTER
7	DREAM GIRL
8	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
9	MUSKETEER
10	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
11	EARTHQUAKE
12	WOLF GIRL

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401

1	CHOCOLAT
2	MONSTERS, INC.
3	HARRY POTTER
4	FINAL DESTINATION
5	THE SCORE
6	SUMMER CATCH
7	BOLD AFFAIR
8	MUSKETEER
9	WOLF GIRL
10	PAGDARING NG PANAHON
11	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
12	ALIPIN NG TUKSO

SM TUTUBAN
2514302

1	MONSTERS, INC.
2	EARTHQUAKE
3	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
4	WOLF GIRL

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9205452

1	WOLF GIRL
2	MUSKETEER
3	ROCK STAR
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5	EARTHQUAKE
6	THE SCORE
7	SUMMER CATCH
8	HARRY POTTER
9	DREAM GIRL
10	KING OF GLADIATOR
11	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
12	MONSTERS, INC.

SM SOUTHMALL
8066088 • 8060782

1	EARTHQUAKE
2	THE SCORE
3	HARRY POTTER
4	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
5	2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
6	BOLD AFFAIR
7	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
8	SUMMER CATCH
9	MUSKETEER
10	WOLF GIRL

SM GUADALUPE COMM'L
8820905

1	2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
2	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
3	WOLF GIRL

SM CEBU
2313876

1	ROCK STAR
2	HARRY POTTER
3	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
4	IRON LADIES
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	DREAM GIRL
7	JEEPERS CREEPERS

SM ILOILO
3209422

1	TIKIM
2	CLOSED
3	DREAM GIRL
4	ROCSTAR
5	JEEPERS CREEPERS
6	BUBBLE BOY
7	CLOSED
8	IRON LADIES

SM PAMPANGA
7128015

1	HARRY POTTER
2	THE SCORE
3	ROCK STAR
4	KING OF GLADIATOR
5	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

SM SUCAT
8294975

1	SUMMER CATCH
2	THE SCORE
3	HARRY POTTER
4	PEARL HARBOR

SM DAVAO

1	HARRY POTTER
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	THE SCORE
4	GLITTER
5	ROCK STAR
6	JEEPERS CREEPERS

DIGITAL dts SOUND DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

DONITA Rose. Will be seen anew on the big screen next year.

Donita thankful for 2001 blessings

MTV girl Donita Rose is ending 2001 with a bang.

Recently, Donita was acknowledged as one of local show biz's prettiest faces and one of the most beautiful Asian celebrities.

She was named female most fashionable show biz personality at the Mega Fashion Awards.

Although she has been busy with her duties at MTV in Singapore where she is based and in most Asian countries where MTV sends her, Donita flies home to the Philippines occasionally to fulfill her commitments here.

One of the more recent was the all-star concert "Xstatic," where she shared top billing with pop idol Gary Valenciano, Lani Misalucha, Piolo Pascual, Karylle and Aiza Seguerra.

Very soon, Donita will grace the big screen anew as she has formally been offered two movies by Star Cinema.

She has started shooting for the first film "9 Mornings," with Piolo Pascual, directed by Joey Reyes.

However, these two movies will not be the last, as Donita has pending offers from four different film outfits.

With MTV, movies, pictorials, occasional concerts and commercial endorsements (for Pepsi, Lux Shampoo and Globe Gen-Text, to name a few), Donita even had to pass up some of the offers that come her way, such as the one that came from a major network which wanted her to star in her own late-night show.

Recently, Donita launched her very own website (www.donitarose.com) via a big event in Glorietta.

Donita is very grateful for all the blessings that have come her way. She is being managed by Genesis Entertainment and Management Inc.

Elijah . . .

(From page A30)

looks a bit like two curly m's—tattooed on their bodies.

"We're going to be intrinsically linked for the rest of our lives anyway," says Wood. "It made it permanent."

That bond and the months spent in rural New Zealand made returning to America and resuming his career feel odd. Wood has already completed his next project—Ed Burns' "Ash Wednesday"—for which he worked only eight days and was in the makeup chair for only a few minutes.

"Coming back, I didn't really have a grasp on what my life meant any more. Because my life was 'The Lord of the Rings.' It was as much a filmic experience as it was a life experience and vice versa," he says.

"I think I'm only now, in the last four or five months, really coming back into life."

Asked what he missed most, Wood lists family, friends, new CDs, the latest movies and Mexican food. Asked what he missed least during his sojourn, Wood thinks for a moment.

"Massive commercialism," he replies, with a laugh.

And now he's part of it. *AP*

SECOND WEEK !
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SUMMER CATCH

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GREENBELT 2	Olesanek (Czech Republic)	Detector (Norway)	This Is My Moon (Sri Lanka)	Nang Nak (Thailand)
GREENBELT 3	Under The Sand (France)	The Price of Milk (New Zealand)	Clouds of May (Turkey)	Dang Birely (Thailand)
GLORIETTA 4	Roads & Bridges (U.S.A.)	Firefly Dreams (Japan)	Batang West Side 11:40 AM (Phils.) / Batang Trapo 6:00 PM (Phils.)	Batang West Side 11:40 AM (Phils.) / Batang Trapo 6:00 PM (Phils.)

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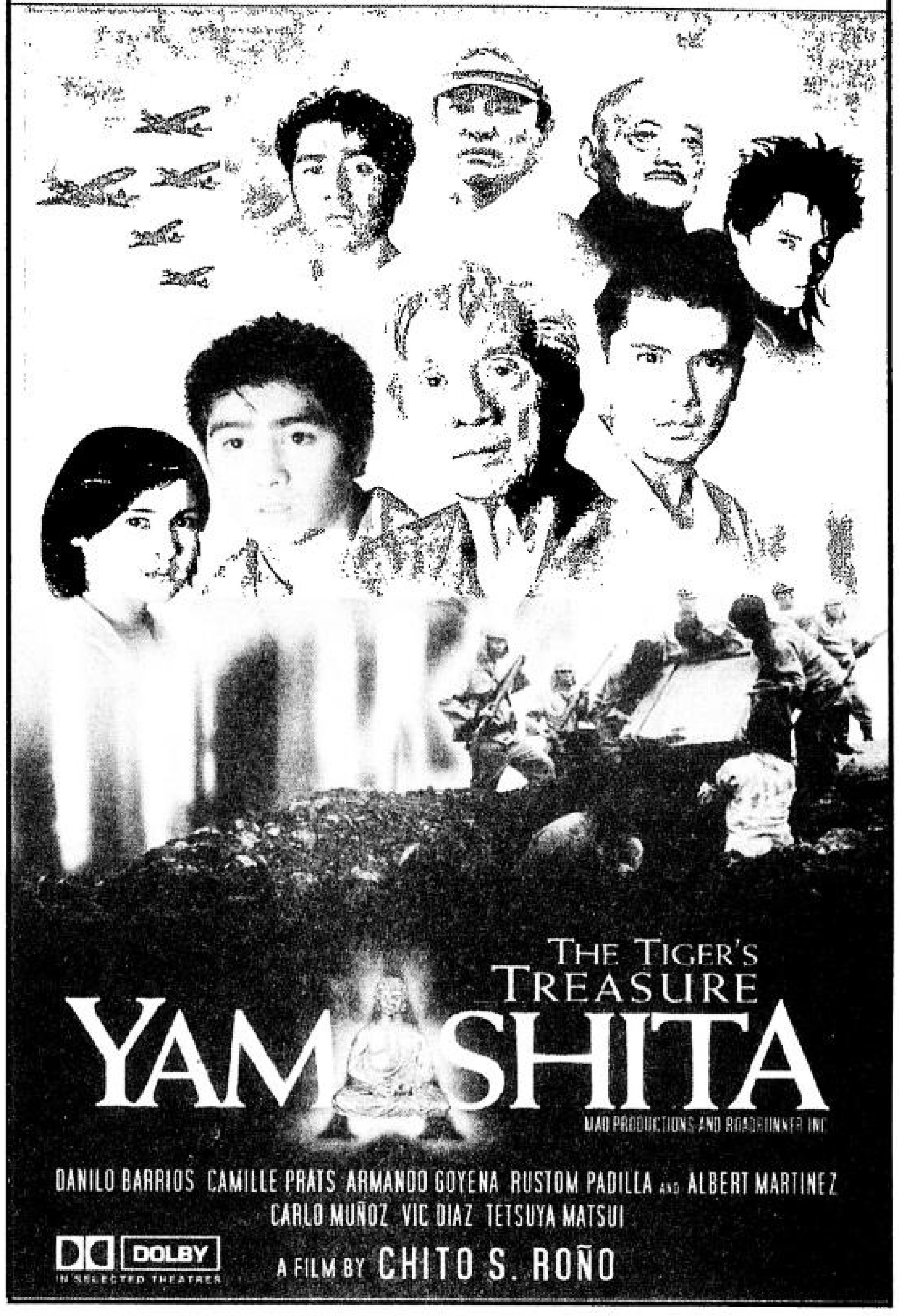
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A FILM BY CHITO S. ROÑO

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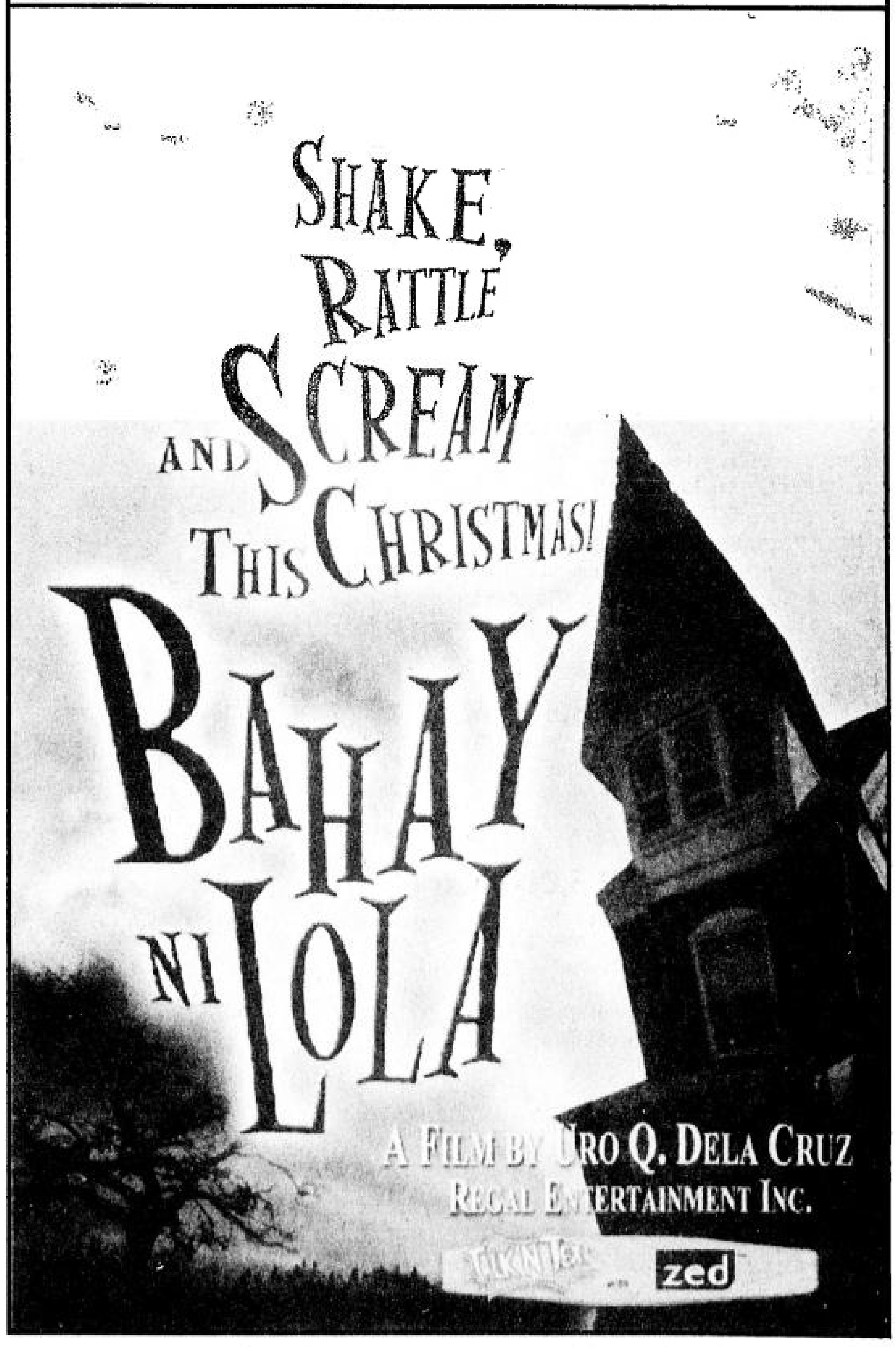
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BAHAY NI LOLA
A FILM BY URO Q. DELA CRUZ
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ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Elijah Wood rides his first commercial juggernaut

AS Frodo, the hobbit whose journey is at the heart of "The Lord of the Rings," the actor must shoulder both the story and the movie franchise.

NEW YORK—When it came to auditioning for the biggest and riskiest role of his young career, Elijah Wood just mailed it in.

That's not to say the 20-year-old actor took it lightly. To win the lead part of Frodo Baggins in "The Lord of the Rings"—the $300-million, three-movie production that would take 16 months to film—Wood refused to just saunter into the casting agent's office.

Instead, he put on a puffy shirt and some goofy suspenders, adopted an English accent and went off into the California woods to videotape himself as a hobbit. George Huang, a buddy and director of "Swimming with Sharks," filmed the audition and they edited it together.

"I wanted to be noticed," says Wood, who would have done "anything to get the role."

Now, with most of the movie trilogy filmed, the actor known for his arty turn in "The Ice Storm" finds himself leading an international juggernaut. With bemusement he sees his likeness splashed across bus shelters, billboards and a set of fast food chain collectible cups.

"Isn't it weird?" he asks. "I never thought I'd be a part of anything this commercial."

During an interview to promote the first film, Wood shrugs at the notion that the stakes have suddenly gotten quite high. As Frodo, the hobbit whose journey is at the heart of "The Lord of the Rings," the actor must shoulder both the story and the movie franchise.

"You can assume that if it does well, it's going to be popular in some way, shape or form for the rest of my life. That's a staggering thought. I'll always be associated with it," he says.

"However, if I maintain a career that has nothing to do with it and I can do things that are successful in their own right aside from 'Lord of the Rings,' then it can be nothing but one part" of a healthy livelihood.

Fellow hobbit and friend Sean Astin isn't worried about Wood handling the pressure. The two bonded during the arduous filming in New Zealand, over a year of lacing up prosthetic hobbit feet and gluing on itchy ears.

"He can't fail—just look at his body of work," says Astin. "Should he be concerned if the film doesn't perform? It is Elijah's doe-eyes on the buses that go by. But he's got more confidence and more comfort in his own skin than anyone I've ever met. Do what you will to try to knock the guy off center, he's just not going to go."

Partly that's because Wood has been around the block. Since making his debut in Richard Gere's 1990 thriller "Internal Affairs," Wood has appeared in "Avalon," "Paradise," "Flipper," "Forever Young," "Radio Flyer," "The War," "Deep Impact" and "The Faculty."

"I'm really blessed to have had a career before 'Lord of the Rings'," Wood says. "People already knew who I was to a certain degree—not huge, but they knew, so it wasn't this debut thing.

Like, Mark Hamill in "Star Wars," he'd never done anything else before so there was nothing else to counteract" that role.

"I'm lucky. I'm 20. It's still the beginning," says Wood.

When the actor's homemade audition tape landed on the desk of director Peter Jackson, the moviemaker tasked with capturing J.R.R. Tolkien's epic vision knew right away that he'd found his leading hobbit. Few candidates had gone to as much trouble to prove their interest.

Wood's already elfish features certainly didn't hurt his chances. His wide-set eyes, translucent skin, fine features and tiny nose—not to mention his smallish stature—lend him an ethereal, expressive quality.

"His eyes are a window to his soul," says actress Liv Tyler, who plays the Elf princess Arwen. "He has big blue eyes and they're so powerful. He's so good at showing emotion effortlessly. I feel when I watch the film that it always comes back to him, no matter where you go."

Wood squirms. "I don't want to take all the credit as if I'm the only person who could play the character, which I'm not. But certainly physically, there are quite a lot of parallels in the way that Frodo's described, which I find interesting," he says.

Another parallel that developed while filming was the closeness forged among the actors playing Tolkien's nine-member fellowship.

Along with Wood and Astin, they are Ian McKellen, Viggo Mortensen, John Rhys-Davies, Billy Boyd, Orlando Bloom, Dominic Monaghan and Sean Bean.

"The fellowship became a reality," Wood says. "We made some of the best friends of our lives. We went through ups and downs together as a single unit. I learned how to surf—we all learned how to surf. We took vacations together. It was so special and profound."

The nine actors were known to rally together to lobby for certain aspects of the production. "This is not just a film, not for anyone involved. It was life for us," says Wood.

As if to prove that point, all nine got the No. 9 in Elvish—which

ELIJAH/ A29

WOOD. "He can't fail."

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2001
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B1
BUSINESS
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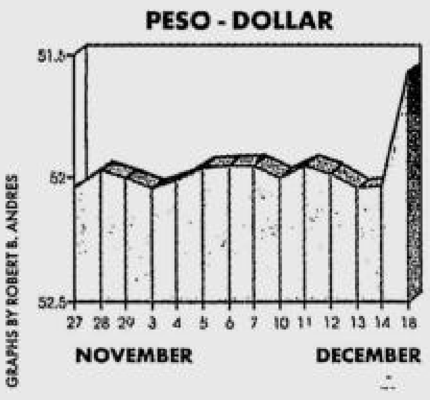
Gov't rejects bids for long-term T-bills

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



Peso-Dollar Rate

P 51.570=$1
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 18, 2001

¥ 128.27 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 18, 2001

GOLD:$278.30/278.80
per ounce Hong Kong, Dec. 18, 2001

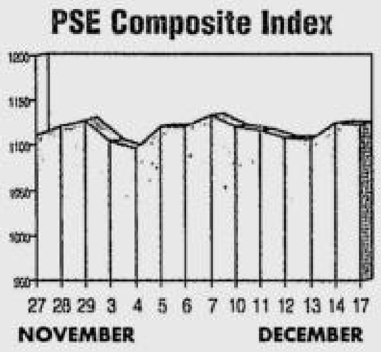
STOCK MARKET

Shares close mixed

SHARES closed mixed yesterday, with the main index dragged lower by profit-taking on stocks of San Miguel Corp. which surged last week on the back of the buy-in of Japan's Kirin Brewery, analysts said.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index slipped 1.61 points, 0.1 percent, to 1,124.40 points after rising by 18.28 points on the back of a San Miguel-led rally Friday to 1,126.01.

Markets were closed Monday for a holiday. AP



(See stock market report on Page B2)

By CLARISSA S. BATINO

THE FIXED-INCOME market yesterday broke the government's five-week winning streak and successfully drove the 91-day treasury bill yield up by 8.6 basis points to 8.873 percent.

However, yields of longer-dated treasury bills were unchanged during yesterday's auction, the last for this year.

National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said the auction committee decided to reject all bids for the six-month and one-year debt notes because it would have raised the yields by 61.5 basis points to 10.507 percent and by 93.8 basis points to 11.638 percent.

Thus, the yields of the 182- and 364-day treasuries were kept at 9.892 percent and 10.7 percent.

Edeza said the banks were trying to preserve their profitability by bidding up rates and by raising "unfounded" concerns that treasury bill yields would go up next year in reaction to fresh borrowings of the government.

"I believe the 91-day treasury bill rate should go down by 50 basis points during the first quarter of next year if not by a full percentage point. We have to get closer to the central bank's borrowing rate of 7.75 percent," he pointed out.

The government had only raised P1 billion from yesterday's auction as banks bucked expectations of the Treasury as well as the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas that treasury bill yields would soften some more.

Edeza said he thought that the benchmark 91-day treasury yield would decline by about 20 basis points while BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura was confident that after last Friday's quarter-of-a-percentage point cut in policy rates, the government's borrowing rate would drop further.

"The market has no reason to drive up the rates because inflation is expected to remain low next year while the US Fed had indicated that the bias is still to cut rates. The market's attempt is really not justified," the national treasurer said.

Next year, Edeza said the government would only borrow about P68 billion from the market, an amount much lower than the P100 billion it borrowed this year.

"How can they say that rates would go up next year when there is at least P32 billion in excess funds next year," he noted.

A fixed-income trader said liquidity had remained tight despite a cut in banks' reserve requirement by two percentage points to 18 percent two weeks ago.

The lower reserve should have armed banks with about P26 billion in fresh funds but a trader said the central bank chose to pay back the reserves with government securities and not with cash.

"We are approaching a long weekend and banks would rather stay liquid than buy treasury bills specially at such low rates when there is a chance that yields could go up in a few weeks," said a trader from a foreign bank.

The bottom line, Edeza said, was

GOV'T/ B4

Gov't to issue ₱6.76B in LGU bonds

THE MACAPAGAL administration has approved a plan to issue P6.76 billion worth of bonds backed by a sovereign guarantee to raise funds that would finance part of the internal revenue allotment, a budget for local government units.

The plan to securitize or issue bonds would enable the LGUs to raise funds for important projects ahead of the scheduled release of their IRA.

The committed P6.76-billion budget for LGUs would be disbursed by the budget department within a six-year period. The amount represents 75 percent of the P9 billion IRA due to the LGUs.

With the planned bond issue, LGUs need not wait for the disbursement but they would have to use the IRA to pay off the bonds as these mature.

The budget department has already released the 25 percent or P2.24 billion of the total IRA commitment.

"With the securitization of the IRA, we will be able to fulfill our obligations to the local governments, which are the prime movers of the countryside," Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said.

If plans push through, the bond issue for the IRA would be the first securitization project to materialize after a string of similar but foiled plans for state-run agencies such as Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. as well as the earnings from the Malampaya gas project.

The plan, Camacho said, was for the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines to issue the bonds to be backed by the national government's guarantee to release the equivalent amount in IRA within a given period.

"We will continue to look for ways to realize the administration's vision to help alleviate poverty in the countryside," the finance secretary said.

Aside from Camacho, also part of the task force to raise funds for the IRA are Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, Local Government Secretary Joey Lina, Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin, and Union of Local Authorities president Rodolfo del Rosario.

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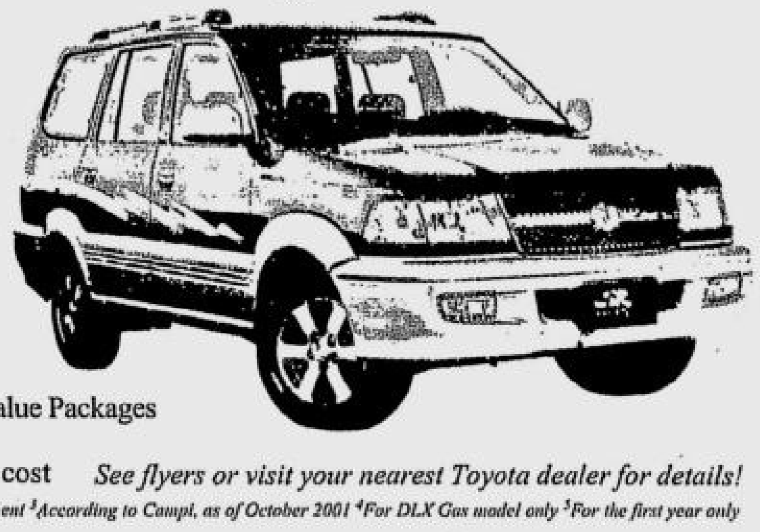

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SMC sets June 13 deadline for submission of proxies

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

THE GOVERNMENT and the group of San Miguel Corp. chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco will have until June 13 next year to solicit proxies from minority shareholders and determine who will be at the helm of the food and beverage giant.

SMC spokesperson Ferdinand Constantino yesterday told the Philippine Stock Exchange that the company's board had set June 13, 2002 as the deadline for submission of proxies while the validation would be by June 20.

But the deadline for nomination to the board of directors was set at March 20, 2002, giving Kirin Brewery Co. Ltd. of Japan—which signed on Friday an agreement to buy 15 percent of SMC for $540 million—time to nominate its two representatives to the 15-member board.

Following the Supreme Court's ruling on Friday that coco levy funds are public funds, the government is now sure of being able to replace five PCGG representatives to the SMC named during the ousted Estrada regime.

On top of the five PCGG seats allotted to the 26.8-percent SMC stake purchased using the coco levy funds, however, the government still has two additional board seats representing the shareholdings of state pension funds Government Service Insurance System and Social Security System.

Combined with Kirin's shareholdings, however, the Cojuangco camp has five board seats representing a 34-percent stake, including the 20 percent that the high tribunal has allowed Cojuangco to vote on.

The remaining three board seats representing other minority shareholders, however, are still expected to vote in favor of Cojuangco unless the government would be able to solicit enough proxies.

The SMC board has set a special stockholders' meeting on Feb. 27 to approve the Kirin investment. The regular stockholders' meeting will be held on June 27.

The Cojuangco camp has pledged that the fresh funds would not be used to dilute nor gobble up the sequestered shares in the food and beverage giant.

Analysts said the deal would put Cojuangco in a stronger position to maintain his chairmanship of SMC even if the Supreme Court had ruled in favor of the government's position that the coco levy should be considered public funds.

As the Kirin transaction will dilute the proxies from the public float mustered by the government to get another board seat during the SMC meeting earlier this year and ensure two board representatives allied to Cojuangco (from Kirin), analysts said Cojuangco could still reelect himself as SMC chair with a vote of 8-7.

PCGG junks ₱275-M deal on Benguet stock sale

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

THE PRESIDENTIAL Commission on Good Government has terminated a P275-million joint cash infusion for mining and water firm Benguet Corp. sealed in 1997 with the Romualdez family's Palm Avenue companies.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, Benguet said it had withdrawn its motion for approval of the 1997 tripartite agreement with the Sandiganbayan "on the ground that the PCGG has changed its position." It also noted that the anti-graft court had already approved the withdrawal.

Benguet had planned to use the fresh equity for the continuing exploration on its various mineral claims in Benguet and Mindanao as well as real estate projects in Benguet and a water project in Baguio City.

The PCGG and two Palm Ave. companies—Palm Avenue Holdings Co. Inc. and Palm Avenue Realty and Development Corp.—earlier agreed to subscribe by way of private placement to 22.68 million class "A" shares and 18 million class "B" shares.

The Palm Avenue companies already control about 27 percent of Benguet. For its part, the PCGG, which sequestered the Palm Avenue shares in Benguet, earlier agreed to do the private placement on condition that the additional shares would also be placed under its supervision.

The PCGG, however, had indicated that it was no longer willing to push through with the deal, nullifying the then pending petition at the Sandiganbayan.

"Further, the share prices have declined as a result of economic events which have transpired since the signing of the tripartite agreement more than four years ago," the Benguet disclosure said.

"Benguet Corp. and the Palm Avenue companies will negotiate with the PCGG for a new private placement based on updated share prices as the Palm Avenue companies have indicated their continuing interest to invest additional equity in Benguet," it noted.

Benguet was founded in 1903 to engage in gold mining operations in the Benguet province but eventually expanded into chromite and copper production. It was listed at the former Manila Stock Exchange in 1950.

High production costs and low gold prices later on forced the company to scale down its mining operations and suspend the operations of subsidiary Benguet Antamok Gold Operation. Activities now focus on water supply and distribution, eco-tourism, trucking and warehousing, trading and steel casting.

Its Masinloc chromite operation was resumed in 2000 after a two-year suspension. The mine is now contributing to its earnings.

The Yuchengo group also owns a minority stake in Benguet through House of Investments (3.97 percent) and Great Pacific Life Assurance Corp. (2.54 percent).

BNP Paribas seeks renewal of permit to operate in RP

BY ELENA R. TORRIJOS

PROMPTED by the new ruling of the Securities and Exchange Commission, another foreign broker has decided to resume operations.

BNP Paribas Peregrine Securities, which went on voluntary suspension last Aug. 13, applied for a renewal of its broker-dealer license with the SEC last Friday, the last day for application.

SEC brokers and exchanges department director Jose Aquino said the government agency would not extend the deadline.

The SEC earlier decided not to renew the licenses of stockbrokers and/or dealers that had gone on voluntary suspension unless they would resume operations.

Without a renewal of its license, a broker, if or when it decides to reenter the local stock market and resume operations, would then be subject to the new rules and requirements of the SEC.

Under the new rules of the SEC, to qualify for a license a broker must have a minimum capital of P100 million.

Currently, existing licensed brokers need only comply with at least a P5-million net capital requirement.

Upon the request of some brokers, the SEC extended the application for renewal of license to Dec. 14.

Other foreign brokerage houses that earlier went on voluntary suspension or had ceased operations this year but have since decided to resume operations in light of the new SEC ruling included Nomura Securities, Magnum International Securities Inc. and Keppel Securities Philippines Inc.

Since the start of this year, 15 foreign brokerage houses have pulled out of the country or suspended operations given the low level of trading volume that was not adequate to sustain their operations.

GG & A Club Shares
SEC License Broker #007575 * As of December 19, 2001

CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,400,000	1,550,000
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	1,450,000	Please Call
Baguio Country Club	725,000	800,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	80,000	100,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	-	110,000
Camp John Hay	220,000	300,000
Canlubang	-	600,000
Canyonwoods	Please Call	330,000
Capitol Hills	110,000	125,000
Cebu Country Club	1,800,000	2,000,000
Celebrity Sports Club	175,000	200,000
Eagle Ridge "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	Please Call
Eastridge "A"	Please Call	Please Call
Evercrest "A"	-	100,000
Forest Hills "A"	-	220,000
Forest Hills "B"	-	230,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	300,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	250,000	320,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	Please Call	375,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	13,000,000	14,500,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	Please Call	13,000,000
Manila Polo	2,700,000	2,800,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	-	670,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	-	725,000
Metropolitan Club "B"	-	150,000
Montemar (Individual)	-	30,000
Mt. Malarayat	350,000	Please Call
Orchard Golf Club "A"	200,000	250,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	-	300,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	-	500,000
Philippine Columbian	-	85,000
Pueblo de Oro "A"/"B"/"C"	-	Please Call
Puerto Azul	100,000	120,000
Quezon City Sports Club	210,000	230,000
Riviera Golf & Country Club "A"	-	Please Call
Rockwell	-	550,000
Sherwood Hills "A"	-	150,000
Sta. Elena "A"	-	1,650,000
Sta. Elena "B"	-	2,200,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)	-	350,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	150,000	190,000
Tagaytay Country Club	-	360,000
Tagaytay Highlands	740,000	-
Tagaytay Midlands	-	720,000
The Country Club	Please Call	Please Call
Valle Verde (Individual)	-	170,000
Valley Golf	220,000	240,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6,300,000	Please Call

PLAYING RIGHTS
(Available Lessors)

Alabang "A"	25,000	Mimosa Golf	25,000
Calatagan "A"	10,000	Orchard "A"	30,000
Canlubang	55,000	Riviera "A"	10,000
Eagleridge	15,000	Sta. Elena	60,000
Eastridge "A"	20,000	Tagaytay CC	20,000
Forest Hills	30,000	Tagaytay Golf	40,000
Manila Southwoods	40,000	Tagaytay Mid.	35,000
Makati Sports "A"	25,000	Valley Golf	20,000
Manila Golf	450,000	Wack-Wack	90,000

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CURRENCIES

Dec. 18, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.107665	1.000000	52.0580
Japan	Yen	0.008691	0.007846	0.4084
United Kingdom	Pound	1.594595	1.439600	74.9427
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.142191	0.128370	6.6827
Switzerland	Franc	0.678135	0.612220	31.8709
Canada	Dollar	0.706419	0.637755	33.2002
Singapore	Dollar	0.603139	0.544514	28.3463
Australia	Dollar	0.573325	0.517598	26.9451
Bahrain	Dinar	2.938260	2.652661	138.0922
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.295378	0.266667	13.8822
Brunei	Dollar	0.603961	0.545256	28.3849
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000109	0.000098	0.0051
Thailand	Baht	0.025289	0.022831	1.1885
UAE	Dirham	0.301652	0.272331	14.1770
Korea	Won	0.000863	0.000779	0.0406
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.902800	46.9980
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.461594	24.0297
France	Franc	0.152450	0.137631	7.1648
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.409673	21.3268
Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.065609	3.4155
Belgium	Franc	0.024790	0.022380	1.1651
Italy	Lire	0.000516	0.000466	0.0243
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.151840	7.9045
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004503	0.2344
Spain	Peseta	0.006010	0.005426	0.2825
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024790	0.02238	1.1651
Ireland	Punt	1.269739	1.14632	59.6751

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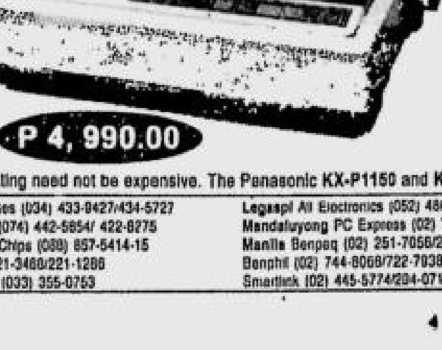

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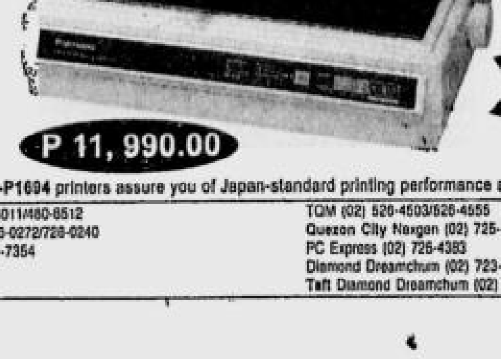

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Smartlink (02) 445-5774/204-0719
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Quezon City Nexgen (02) 725-4383/85/87
PC Express (02) 726-4383
Diamond Dreamchum (02) 723-2950/7232980
Taft Diamond Dreamchum (02) 536-2816/522-7420

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Tuesday, December 18, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	56.5	57	55.5	56.5	938,200
China Banking Corp.	560	560	560	560	40
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	22.5	23.5	22.5	22.5	642,300
Global Business Bank Inc	69	65	69	65	200
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	180	180	178	180	37,540
Philippine National Bank	57	58.5	57	58.5	97,800
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	20	20	20	20	200
Security Bank Corp. Secb 5	15.75	15.25	15.75		37,400
Union Bank of the Phil.	14.25	14.5	14.25	14.5	2,300
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	30,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	60,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	220	240	220	240	140
Manulife Financial Corp.	1330	1330	1320	1320	6,080
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1120	1120	1090	1090	1,490
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23	23	23	23	65,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.37	0.38	0.37	0.38	110,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	575	575	575	575	15,520
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3	3.2	3	3	23,000
Piltel	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	250,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	60,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	407.5	415	407.5	412.5	152,020
Ivantage Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	60,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.019	0.019	0.018	0.019	42,400,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	23	23.75	22.75	23.25	14,300
Manila Electric Co. B	30.5	30.5	30	30	482,000
Petron Corp.	1.48	1.52	1.48	1.5	4,059,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	1.96	2	1.94	1.96	2,071,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	60,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	100,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	3,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	41,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	12	12	12	12	417,700
La Tondena Distillers Inc.	23	23	23	23	579,800
RFM Corp.	2.22	2.3	2.22	2.24	5,871,000
San Miguel Corp. A	44	44	42.5	42.5	1,727,300
San Miguel Corp. B	56	56	53	53	746,800
Universal Robina Corp.	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	352,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.6	0.63	0.6	0.63	590,000
Ayala Corp.	4.65	4.65	4.6	4.65	3,081,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	200,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	20,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	51,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	10,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.15	0.15	0.13	0.13	30,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.67	0.7	0.67	0.69	7,420,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.13	0.14	650,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	100,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.18	420,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	20,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	26.5	27	26.5	26.5	541,500
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.135	0.135	0.13	0.13	170,000
House Of Investments Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	50,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc	1.52	1.54	1.52	1.54	495,000
Medco Holdings	0.13	0.18	0.11	0.11	240,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.7	0.72	0.69	0.72	2,870,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	290,000
Music Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.35	0.35	2,930,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	130,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.16	0.165	0.16	0.165	300,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	1,200,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	18,000
Central Azucar Don Pedro	0.76	0.8	0.75	0.8	770,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	13	13.25	13	13.25	87,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.45	0.47	0.45	0.47	1,780,000
Manila Jockey Club	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.2	3,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	22.5	22.75	22.5	22.5	108,500
Cosmos Bottling Corp.-Pref	11	11	11	11	800
Equitable Pci Bank-War	1.9	1.9	1.54	1.54	197,000
Globe Telecom Hldg (Pdr)	570	570	565	570	5,500
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0012	0.0012	0.0012	0.0012	15,000,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10	10	10	10	1,000
Philweb.Com Inc. -Warrants	0.006	0.006	0.005	0.0055	60,000,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	10,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.75	4.8	4.75	4.8	7,805,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	100,000
Cityland Development Corp	-	-	-	-	-
Cebu Holdings Inc.	-	-	-	-	-
C & P Homes Inc.	0.21	0.22	0.21	0.22	1,370,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.34	1,050,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.235	0.235	0.23	0.235	650,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.74	1.76	1.74	1.76	791,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	240,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	210,000
MRc Allied Ind. Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	100,000
SM Development Corp.	0.82	0.85	0.82	0.85	3,140,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.2	6.2	6.1	6.1	2,823,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc B	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	20,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	3	3	3	3	1,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	400,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	800,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	22,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	100,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.235	0.25	0.235	0.25	2,110,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	5,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.006	0.006	0.0055	0.0055	32,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	15,000,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	60,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	1,853,690	90,450,365.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	210,398,740	294,335,715.00
PRO	18,279,000	59,657,640.00
Mining	25,431,000	818,800.00
OIL	52,060,000	361,700.00
GRAND TOTALS :	308,022,430	445,624,220.00

AVERAGES

Banks & Fin Svc	468.66	UP 1.86
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,539.87	DOWN 7.75
PRO	492.99	UP 3.12
Mining	1,020.30	UP 3.34
OIL	1.92	DOWN 0.06
All Shares Index	688.04	DOWN 2.08
Composite	1,124.40	DOWN 1.61

NO. OF ADVANCES: 31; NO. OF DECLINES: 24; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 40; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 95; NO. OF TRADES: 2,065

DISCLOSURES

CENTRAL Azucarera Don Pedro changed its name to **Roxas Holdings Inc.** as well as its primary purpose from sugar manufacturing to a holding and investment company.

* * *

SAN Miguel Corp. will increase its authorized capital stock from P15 billion to P22.5 billion. It will hold a special stockholders' meeting on Feb. 27, 2002 to approve the increase and the denial of pre-emptive rights to the issuance of 442.56 million shares to **Kirin Brewery Co. Ltd.**

* * *

BANK of the Philippine Islands clarified that its acquisition of a P400-million personal loan portfolio of a large corporation would only contribute 0.2 percent to its total loan portfolio. The bank also declared P0.80 per share cash dividend in favor of stockholders of record as of Dec. 29.

* * *

JG Summit Holdings Inc.'s wholly owned subsidiary **Express Holdings Inc.** bought 650,000 shares of **Universal Robina Corp.** at P4.40 per share.

Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

Kirin and Camacho

COCKTALES

By Victor C. Agustin

PRESIDENT Macapagal may have stumbled on how her fair-haired boy, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, would finally get past the strident objection to his appointment from opposition Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta.

With Malacañang naming Camacho the master brewer to the San Miguel-Kirin deal, Oreta may have no choice but to drop altogether her opposition to her Urdaneta Village neighbor.

This scenario is anchored, of course, on the assumption that Oreta dances to the tune of Danding, who after all is her cousin-in-law, and Danding's lawyer, de facto Senate opposition leader Edgardo Angara.

Judging from the various statements emanating from both Malacañang and the opposition, the two antagonists have dropped their partisanship to both raise their mugs and cheer the buy-in of the Japanese brewing giant into the Philippines' own.

"We have to combine our good investment climate for a big investment of Kirin and the opportunity that we can grab to have relief for the farmers," as Ms Macapagal herself put it.

That Camacho, the investment banker, was named the lead official to evaluate the Kirin investment, and not PCGG Chair Haydee Yorac means that, provided safeguards satisfactory to Malacañang are in place, the Kirin buy-in would be a done deal.

One safeguard that could be put in place, to overcome the PCGG objections that the Kirin deal had been hatched in secrecy and that the Kirin-San

COCKTALES/ B4

COUNTRY SHARES

As of December 19, 2001

	BUYING	SELLING
ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB A/B*	1 350 000	1.4 M/1,500 000 M*
BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	700,000	730 000
CALATAGAN GOLF CLUB A/B*	-	100,000/105,000*
CAMP JOHN HAY		300 000
CANLUBANG		750,000
CAPITOL HILLS		120 000
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	-	200 000
EAGLE RIDGE A/B*/C**	620,000**	375,000/450 000*/700 000**
EVERCREST A/B*	135,000*	100 000/150 000*
FONTANA D/C*/B**	-	90 000/150 000*280 000**
FOREST HILLS A/B*/C**	180,000	230,000/350,000*/450,000**
LUISITA GOLF CLUB	-	Pls call or swap
MAKATI SPORTS A/B*	275,000	300,000/400,000*
MANILA GOLF CLUB CORP. IND.	-	14 M
MANILA POLO CLUB	2.6M	2,800 000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS A/B*	-	700,000/7500,000*
METROPOLITAN A/B*		125 000/145,000*
MIMOSA IND /CORP.*	-	240 000/375,000*
MT MALARAYAT A/C**/B*	600,000**	400,000*/625,000**
ORCHARD A/B*/C**	200,000/400,000***	230 000/425 000*
PUERTO AZUL A/B*	140,000	145,000/Pls call*
RIVIERA A/B*	-	200,000/400 000*
ROCKWELL CLUB	-	500 000
ROYALE TAGAYTAY A/B*/C**	-	110,000/150,000*/180 000**
SHERWOOD HILLS A/B*/C**	-	230,000/350,000*/450,000**
STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB A	-	1,650,000
SUBIC BAY IND/CORP.*	-	300,000/450 000*
TAT FILIPINAS GOLF A/B*	-	350,000/550 000*
TAGAYTAY H-LANDS CC/GOLF*	370,000	375,000/750 000*
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	650,000	700 000
VALLE VERDE IND.	·170,000	185,000
WACK WACK	6M	6.5 M

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BMW 325ia Exec	2,700,000	540,500	56,856

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Per DTI-NCR Permit no. 4234-Series of 2001

SECOND TRANCHE

ADB releases $100M for power sector reform

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ASIAN Development Bank finally released yesterday a $100-million loan representing the second tranche of the $300-million power sector restructuring program financing. The amount brought to $210 million the total funds disbursed by the ADB to the country this year.

In a briefing yesterday, ADB country director for the Philippines Gunther Hecker said most of the requirements tied to the second tranche of the $300-million power reform program financing, whose core objective is the privatization of bleeding National Power Corp., had been met.

Hecker said he did not know whether the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, which was co-financing the program loan, would follow suit by releasing its $100 million worth of counterpart funding.

"But as far as the ADB is concerned, most of the conditions have been complied with and there is no doubt that the remaining conditions will be met," he said.

Among the conditions tied to the second tranche of the loan that have already been met were:

- The identification of Napocor's projections for its maximum capacity to carry debts;
- Implementation of the unbundling of Napocor's tariffs;
- Napocor's compliance with its financial covenants with the ADB;
- Determination of independent power producers' liabilities that could not be absorbed by Napocor's generation companies;
- Submission of Napocor's privatization plan to the government;
- Permission of Napocor's creditor banks to transfer its liabilities to the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp., and,
- Review of Napocor's billing and metering infrastructure.

There were some minor requirements that had not been fully complied with but the ADB had decided to waive them in order to fast-track the disbursement of the loan.

"For example, not all the metering systems have been installed but the installation has been ongoing," he said.

The ADB earmarked $300 million for the power sector loan as early as December 1998 but the disbursement was delayed due to the country's failure to comply with some of the major requirements tied to the program.

The ADB said it believed the reforms were urgent, noting that any delay could lead to power supply dislocation that could delay industrial recovery.

The ADB has already extended by another two years the power reform loan due to the delay in the passage of the Omnibus Power Law.

The disbursement of the third and final tranche of the program is expected before September 2002 when the program expires. The government is planning to ask the ADB to further extend the deadline of the final program completion by at least a quarter to end-December next year.

Napocor was badly hit by the Asian financial crisis, which bloated its debt-service burden and aggravated institutional constraints faced by the government in trying to run a stable, efficient and cost-effective power industry.

Proceeds from the ADB loan were meant to finance some of the adjustment costs of the restructuring, which included the debt burden, the incorporation of long-term take-or-pay contracts with independent power producers into the competitive framework and separation payments to employees.

Meanwhile, Hecker also announced that the ADB had released last week, or only two weeks after the board approved the loan, the $75 million non-bank financial governance program loan to the Philippines.

This program loan aims to improve corporate governance in the country and boost the beleaguered Philippine Stock Exchange, which was hit by shrinking trade volumes and the pullout of a number of foreign brokers.

The loan package aims to assist the government in its efforts to increase the efficiency of the financial markets and to strengthen capital market regulatory institutions.

On top of the non-bank financial sector and the power reform loans, the ADB earlier this year released $35 million in project loans meant for basic infrastructure projects in Mindanao.

Committee handling Napocor insurance to choose 2 brokers

By Ronnel W. Domingo

ENERGY Secretary Vicente Perez Jr. said on Friday that the committee tasked to renew the National Power Corp.'s insurance policy was expected to choose two brokers for a negotiated contact.

Perez said in a news briefing that the two brokers would be chosen from among the four that prequalified in the second failed bidding for the policy held on Nov. 19.

Napocor's industrial all-risk policy covers $6.5 billion worth of assets.

Last week, the committee was reported to have picked the Heath Lambert Group to work out the policy's renewal.

"The committee has no final decision yet (on picking Heath Lambert), but if this is so, there would be a second broker," Perez said.

Perez sits as one of two members who represent Napocor. The secretary is also vice chair of the power firm.

Two other members represent the Government Service Insurance System, which, by law, is mandated to handle all insurance coverage of government agencies and corporations.

After the second auction failed, Finance Undersecretary Antonio Bernardo said the committee would seek alternative schemes to cover Napocor's insurance needs.

But Bernardo, who acts as committee chair in the lieu of Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, said should the committee opt for negotiations, "things would be a lot easier and the process would be very fast."

"The law provides that government contracts may be secured through negotiations if biddings for such fail twice," he noted.

He said the second bidding failed because none of the four brokers who submitted their bid met the mandated technical requirements set for the auction.

He said this meant that the bids could not be compared within the same parameters.

"Probably because of the different insurance conditions worldwide, the firms could only provide coverage for limited and different areas," Bernardo said.

In an earlier interview, Perez said negotiations for a contract would be limited to the insurance brokers who submitted bids in the Nov. 19 bidding.

These include Arthur J. Gallagher & Co., Heath Lambert, Marsh & Mclennan and Aon Energy.

ZETA-BALOGH DEAL

One of the immediate outcomes of the Philippine-France Business Mission to Paris on Nov. 14-15 was a business deal between Zeta Technologies, a high-tech security solutions company in the Philippines, and Balogh Hyperx ID, S.A., the leader in long-range security access technology in France. The contract signing ceremony in Paris on Nov. 14 was attended by (from left) Zeta managing director Marcelo B. Javier, Balogh Asia manager Kim Eck Tang, Balogh export manager Eric Rivognac, Zeta chief executive officer Ted B. Javier, former President Fidel V. Ramos, who led the mission, and Philippine Ambassador to France Hector Villaroel.

Subic exports to exceed $1B

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

EXPORTS from the Subic Bay Freeport Zone are expected to top the $1-billion mark for the third straight year in 2001 as companies in the former American naval base buck the sharp downturn in electronic exports.

Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority chair Felicito Payumo said the robust export earnings of Subic Freeport showed that not all semiconductor manufacturers were badly hit by the meltdown in semiconductor and electronic products, the industry's worst global downturn in 40 years.

As of November this year, Payumo said exports in Subic have reached $890.7 million, down by 18.25 percent from the same period last year. But he expects exports to easily reach the $1-billion mark by December this year as Wistron nearly doubled its production from 70,000 units to 130,000 in time for the holiday season.

Payumo said Acer has closed down some of its plants in Europe, Taiwan and the US and shifted these operations to the Philippines because of significant savings in production. He said that there were still opportunities to be made despite the global recession.

When he assumed the SBMA post in mid-1998, Payumo said Subic exports were only at $500 million. In 1999 and 2000, Subic exports reached over $1 billion despite the air row between the Philippine and Taiwan which affected the freeport's biggest locator, Taiwan personal computer maker Acer (now Wistron Infocomm).

FROM P145 TO P120 PER BAG

Cement prices declining

RETAIL prices of cement dropped from as high as P145 per bag in October to P120 per bag last month, following the Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI) decision to impose a P20.60 per bag tariff on imported cement.

In a report, the DTI said there was a month-on-month reduction in cement prices in practically all of the country's 16 regions, with the lowest price noted in Iloilo (Region V) at P120 per 40-kilogram bag, down from the month-ago level of P128 per bag. The highest reduction was noted in Metro Manila, where cement prices dropped by an average of P15, or from P140 to P125 per bag, month-on-month.

The DTI attributed the lower cement prices to the imposition of the provisional tariff on imported cement, which stabilized the price of local cement. The report was presented during a recent meeting of the inter-agency National Price Coordinating Council.

Trade and Industry Secretary Mar Roxas II ordered on Nov. 7 the imposition of a P20.60 provisional tariff on cement imports as a safeguard for the Philippine cement industry against imported cement dumped into the country. Last week, the Bureau of Customs started collecting the said tariff, which will be effective for 200 days.

Even before the government has started implementing the tariff however, three cement manufacturers, namely, Union Cement Corp., Republic Cement Corp., and Southeast Asian Cement Corp. had separately announced plans to reduce their prices, in anticipation of a more level playing field. They said that the tariff put them in a better position to lower their prices because they could now recover the sales volumes that they had earlier lost to imports.

The flooding of imported cement in the country resulted in the drastic reduction in the market share of local cement makers.

Prior to the imposition of the safeguard measure, imported cement was being retailed at the same price range as, or even higher than, the local cement, despite the fact that these were being brought into the Philippines for as low as P52 per bag.

The imposition of the cement tariff was the first to be ordered by the DTI under Republic Act No. 8800, or the Safeguard Measures Act, which aims to provide relief to local industries threatened by unfair competition from imports.

The DTI directive was in response to the cement industry's application for safeguard measures in the wake of an import surge that saw cement importers cornering as high as 35 percent of the total market in July this year, from only 1.4 percent in 1998.

Cargo firm opens Davao-Manado route

DAVAO CITY—Cargo firm Aboitiz Inc. will open next month its Mindanao-North Sulawesi air cargo route, which is expected to strengthen trade and economic links between the two East Asean Growth Area-member regions.

"The company plans to service two cargo flights daily, each with a capacity of five to six metric tons," May Marte, Aboitiz branch team manager here, said.

She said a YSL II aircraft would be assigned to the new routes, which will cover the cities of General Santos and Davao City in Mindanao, and Manado in North Sulawesi, Indonesia.

The only other air link between the two territories is Bouraq Airlines' twice-a-week passenger service between Davao and Manado.

"Flight schedules are tentative as yet, and will be adjusted to coordinate with flight connections from Davao and General Santos to Manila up to their final destinations," Marte said.

Among the goods to be shipped in the new route are fresh and processed tuna, cosmetics and consumer goods, and dairy products such as ice cream.

The formation of the new air and sea linkages is seen to boost the revitalization of the Eaga, a joint public-private sector initiative established in 1994 by the Philippines and neighbors Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia and Malaysia, as a way of stimulating economic growth and strengthening security cooperation.

Renne Subido of the USAID-Growth with Equity in Mindanao Program said Mindanao businessmen and officials have been working with their counterparts in Sabah, North Sulawesi, and other Eaga territories in past months to establish passenger and cargo routes.

Subido said the new route was facilitated through the joint efforts of the North Sulawesi and General Santos chambers of commerce, with support from presidential adviser and special envoy to BIMP-Eaga Paul Dominguez, to improve linkages in the growth area.

Manado is the capital of Sulawesi Utara Province, and has a population of more than 320,000 people.

The city, a trading center with seaport and international airport, is a top producer of coffee, spices, and lumber.

General Santos City and Davao City are the agro-industrial hubs of Southern Mindanao.

"Gensan" has an international-standard airport which serves as a major transshipment point for sashimi-grade tuna and other commodities, while Davao's Laguindingan international airport is set to open in mid-2002. *Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

INQUIRER MONITOR

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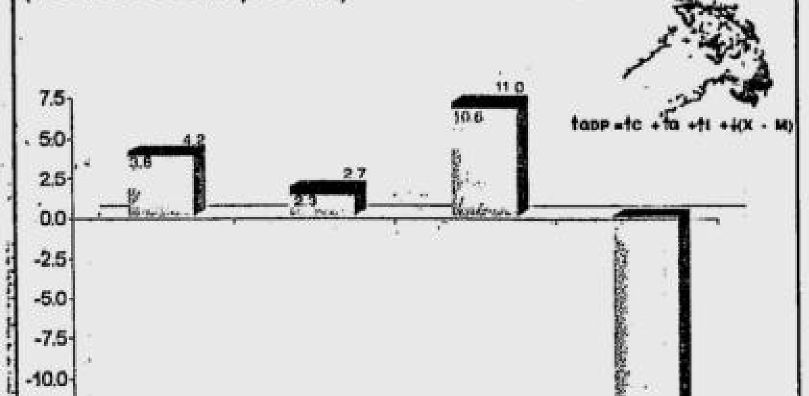
Medium term RP growth projections*

(2001 to 2006, in percent)



*average annual growth

Source: National Economic and Development Authority

THE AVERAGE annual economic growth until 2006 was estimated at 5.1 percent, to be fueled by domestic demand. Investments are seen to grow by at least 10.6 percent yearly while consumption is expected to grow by at least 3.8 percent. Government spending will grow by only 2.3 percent. Net exports (exports minus imports) are expected to deteriorate as imports are seen to grow faster than exports.

Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

Gov't rejects bids for long-term T-bills

(From page B1)

that banks just wanted to preserve their profits at a time when the government was not in dire need of funds and when much of the bad news had dissipated.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho yesterday reiterated that the national government would meet its P145-billion budget deficit target this year.

Camacho said the target would be achieved even without the expected P10-billion remittance from the Philippine Estates Authority, which was to get the funds from the sale of a P15-billion property to Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

Camacho added that the Bureau of Internal Revenue was anticipating a higher revenue collection in November, a factor that could help bring down the budget gap. He also noted an expected P6-billion revenue surplus in December.

Cocktales . . .

(From page B3)

Miguel voting trust would give unchecked power to Danding, is for the government to be made a partner to the voting trust.

Camacho is apparently amenable to the tri-party alliance, which should force Danding and Kirin to consult and seek Malacañang approval in any major business decision.

"I have thought of it (the government being included in the voting trust) but I am not sure about its implications," he said yesterday, before the special Cabinet meeting to discuss the Kirin buy-in.

Poser on Pascua

RICARDO Pascua, the president of Metro Pacific Corp. who is supposed to be on an indefinite leave, is apparently encountering difficulties in forming a group that would be the vehicle to his management buyout proposal.

As of last week, Pascua has not submitted any proposal to Metro Pacific, as against the two already forwarded by competing Ayala Land.

According to his former colleagues, Pascua has stopped showing up at The Fort as a result of Ayala Land's objection to his insider presence, and has been using his Bel-Air residence as temporary office.

Pascua reportedly attempted to enlist San Miguel vice chair Ramon Ang to his cause, but that Ang declined, saying he was in the market for agricultural, not high-end commercial, lands.

According to the grapevine, no other Metro Pacific officer or staff joined Pascua in his MBO plan or his exodus.

Capri-cious defense

PNCC Chair Luis Sison may be quick in slapping fines on erring motorists in the North and South Luzon expressways but he himself is snail-paced when it comes to paying his dues.

The Makati Metropolitan Trial Court has finally issued a writ of execution over a 1997 decision collecting P105,000 plus interest and cost of suit against Sison and company who represent the board of the Capri Condominium Homeowners Association.

The Cupang, Muntinlupa-condo, with Sison as president, was found by the court to have been remiss in paying its security agency, the Blue Lancer Security and Investigation Agency, for security services rendered way back in 1995.

In his 1997 decision, Judge Romulo Lapuz noted that Sison and company never even bothered to answer the court summons, prompting him to declare Sison in default.

Heard through the grapevine

TWO Metro Manila-based newspapers are set to stop publication this yearend.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

Singapore trade still falling

SINGAPORE—Singapore's key non-oil domestic exports (NODX) fell 21.1 percent in November from a year ago as the ailing economy floundered amid weak global demand, especially in the crucial electronics sector, the government said Tuesday.

"The global electronic demand remained in its persistent slump," the trade development board said in a statement.

It was the ninth consecutive monthly decline for the NODX, a closely watched figure for its insight into the island's economic health.

The fall compared to a 21.6-percent decline in October, a record 30.7-percent dive in September and a 29.9-percent fall in August.

Electronic products fell by 31.2 percent in October as sluggish global conditions continued to dampen the market.

"All the major electronic items such as integrated circuits, disk drives, parts of PCs, PCs and telecommunication equipment remained in negative territory," the statement said.

Within the sector, integrated circuit exports were down 50.5 percent.

Analysts said the dismal November figures were expected and would have no impact on the market.

The 21.1-percent decline is "completely unsurprising," said Bank of America economist Simon Flint.

"Since it is so close to consensus, it makes it uninteresting for the market."

In mid-afternoon trade the Singapore Exchange was up 9.49 points at 1,567.94

Of Singapore's top 10 markets, all were in negative territory in November except Hong Kong which showed a modest 2.8-percent increase.

Of the city-state's three prime markets, the NODX to the United States contracted 35.1 percent in November, the European Union was down 26.7 percent and Japan declined 23.9 percent.

According to official forecasts, Southeast Asia's wealthiest economy is projected to contract by 3.0 percent this year after sizzling growth of 9.9 percent in 2000.

Growth for next year is forecast between negative 2 to positive 2 percent. *AFP*

Jardine sells 50% stake in Colliers

HONG KONG—British conglomerate Jardine Matheson Ltd. said Tuesday it sold its 50-percent stake in Asia Pacific real estate services joint venture Colliers Jardine Holdings Ltd. in exchange for full ownership of Colliers Jardine's Hong Kong and Macau property management businesses.

Jardine Matheson said it sold the stake to joint venture partner Colliers Macauley Nicolls (CMN), the largest member of Colliers International Property Consultants, which was affiliated in 20 countries worldwide.

"The sale of our interest in Colliers Jardine to CMN will enable them to integrate the business with their Colliers operations in other parts of the world," Jardine Matheson director James Riley said in a statement.

"Our decision in the Hong Kong property management business reflects Jardines' continuing belief in the prospects for the territory's property sector," he said.

Colliers Jardine employs more than 1,600 people and specializes in providing property valuation, brokerage and management services, with operations in Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore, New Zealand, China, India, Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Malaysia.

The Hong Kong property management business employs more than 3,100 staff and manages 327 properties with a gross floor area of 94 million square feet spread across the residential, commercial and public sector markets.

In recent weeks, several property tycoons have said the local property market is reviving.

The property market, a pillar of the Hong Kong economy, has plunged since the Asian financial crisis in 1997, but has shown signs of improvement this year after a succession of interest rate cuts. *AFP*

Moody's cuts Boeing rating

NEW YORK—Moody's Investors Services announced Monday it had downgraded Boeing's long-term senior unsecured debt rating to A2 from A1 due to a weak aerospace market.

Moody's said it had also downgraded the long and short-term debt ratings of Boeing Capital Corp. to A3 and Prime-2 from A2 and Prime-1, respectively.

The moves reflect the potential negative implications of the materially weakened commercial aerospace market on Boeing's and BCC's operating performance, according to a Moody's statement.

It said it believed that Boeing's consolidated earnings and cash flows would be under pressure and that potential for additional portfolio growth at BCC would require significant capital use, affecting its enterprise balance sheet and risk profile.

Nonetheless, the ratings outlook for both firms is stable, Moody's said, citing expectations of favorable performance from Boeing's defense and space business to offset most of the weakness in the commercial aircraft business. *AFP*

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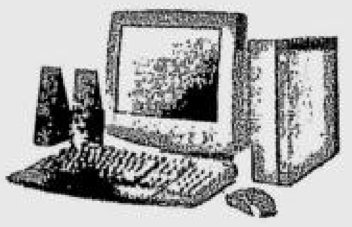

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Asia-Pacific LCD monitor market jumps nearly 7-fold

SINGAPORE—Sales of sleeker liquid crystal display computer monitors in the Asia-Pacific region rocketed nearly sevenfold in the September quarter from a year earlier as prices fell, an industry report said Tuesday.

International Data Corp. said the rise, which resulted in 574,255 sales in the third quarter, was likely to continue. LCD sales were expected to climb fivefold over the full year and a slower 78 percent in 2002.

Negative consumer sentiment after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks was primarily felt in the market for conventional computer monitors, which was expected to contract by one percent overall this year, IDC said.

LCD monitors, which are slim and sleek display screens and come with higher resolution than the conventional Cathode Ray Tube monitors, now account for 11 percent of the total market for personal computers.

They are fast encroaching into the territory of the thick, heavyset traditional monitors that look like television sets, IDC said.

In the third quarter of last year, LCDs accounted for only 1.6 percent of the total monitor market in the Asia-Pacific region outside Japan. This increased to 5.4 percent in the second quarter of this year, IDC said.

The third quarter sales volume doubled from the preceding quarter.

"We are finally seeing LCD monitors claim a more prominent role in the market, spurred by prices falling 56 percent on average over the course of the year," IDC analyst Manny Lopez was quoted as saying in a press statement.

"Furthermore, PC vendors are increasingly building LCD monitors with their computers, thus dramatically driving adoption," Lopez said.

"Given the current tough PC market conditions, many vendors throughout the region are looking to differentiate themselves from their competitors and with the recent price drops in LCDs, bundling these monitors with PCs is an effective way to make their products more attractive," he added.

The market in China accounted for a bulk of the third quarter increase, with LCD sales rising fivefold in the three months to September from the June quarter.

China and South Korea are forecast to lead growth next year, it said. *AFP*

Vivendi aims to flex muscle

NEW YORK—Vivendi Universal's blockbuster deal to take control of USA Networks gives the French firm the muscle to compete in the global media-entertainment market with the likes of AOL Time Warner and other heavyweights.

The move announced Monday, days after Vivendi said it was buying a stake in the US satellite television group EchoStar, aims to follow the AOL Time Warner strategy of controlling content—music, films and television programming—as well as the means to distribute them.

"Along with our strategic partnership with EchoStar, this transaction fully addresses Vivendi Universal's needs in terms of integration and distribution on the US market," said Vivendi Universal chairman Jean-Marie Messier.

If EchoStar's planned merger with DirectTV goes through, Vivendi will have gained access to nearly 15 million satellite TV subscribers in the US, making it a serious competitor to AOL Time Warner, Viacom and Walt Disney Co.

Among other giants, industry leader AOL Time Warner has some 12.8 million cable subscribers as well as various broadcasting units, such as CNN, HBO and TBS.

Viacom meanwhile has the Paramount film studios as well as the CBS television group and other cable channels; Disney has its own studios as well as the ABC network; and News Corp has the Fox broadcasting and film units along with its BSkyB satellite broadcast division. *AFP*

IMF sovereign bankruptcy plan comes too late for Argentina

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina—It has received two multibillion-dollar International Monetary Fund rescue packages in the past 12 months, but Argentina, crippled by a four-year recession, still looks like it's limping toward default on its $132-billion debt.

So what's the answer?

If Argentina were a company, it could seek bankruptcy protection while sorting out its books and negotiating with creditors.

But sovereign debtors can't do that, or can they? If the IMF gets its way, entire nations may be able to seek the protection from creditors that most corporations can use.

Anne Krueger, the IMF's No. 2 and US representative, recently suggested embracing an international bankruptcy proceeding for countries with "truly unsustainable" debts.

The proposal, while novel, isn't unique. Harvard University economist Jeffrey Sachs first floated the idea more than a decade ago, but it never developed.

But this time, US President George W. Bush's administration seems to be seriously seeking an alternative to the current options: bailout or default.

History shows that defaults tend to be chaotic and their effects can easily cross national borders and drag down other economies like falling dominoes. It happened in 1994 during Mexico's tequila crisis, again in 1998 when Russia experienced its unilateral default and, perhaps most visibly, the Asian crisis of 1997-1998.

In a recent speech to the National Economists' Club in Washington, Krueger proposed that countries in difficulties could request a "temporary standstill" on debt repayment. They could then impose exchange controls to stop capital flight, buying time to negotiate debt restructuring.

In Argentina, Economy Minister Domingo Cavallo has said an international bankruptcy process will "undoubtedly be useful."

Other economists agree because, they say, it spreads the blame for default.

"Argentina is to blame without doubt, but so are the creditors who kept on lending money," said former economy ministry official Eduardo Curia.

But there are problems.

"The suspension of payments of a country and a company are totally different," said Eliana Cardoso, an economist at Georgetown University's Center for Latin American Studies.

Krueger's plan would require changes in IMF procedures and in the laws of individual countries to prevent an individual creditor from going to court to sue for prompt payment.

When a business goes under, an impartial adjudicator—normally a bankruptcy judge—is named to oversee the case.

To make sure the company is negotiating in good faith and will follow sensible financial policy, its management is often changed.

As a last resort, its assets can be stripped.

"In this case, who would be the judge?" asked Cardoso.

Although the IMF is probably best-suited for this role, Cardoso said the lending agency is "hardly a neutral court: it's made up of 183 member countries, some of which carry much more weight than others."

"And how do you replace the administration of a country? Governments are elected, countries are sovereign," said Cardoso.

"It's also difficult to imagine countries allowing creditors to strip assets: a piece of land here, a strip of beach there," she said.

In Argentina's case, Cardoso says there seems to be little consensus yet among IMF officials.

Michael Mussa, the IMF's former chief economist during the Asian crisis, has urged Argentina to devalue its peso and pull itself out of the slump.

Treasury Undersecretary John Taylor has backed continued IMF bailouts.

"The difference in opinions is wide," said Cardoso. "It's like a hot potato: Nobody wants to accept responsibility."

In any case, any new IMF plan will likely come too late to help Argentina.

Krueger said that "even with unanimous political support, this approach could not be put in place for at least two or three years." *AP*

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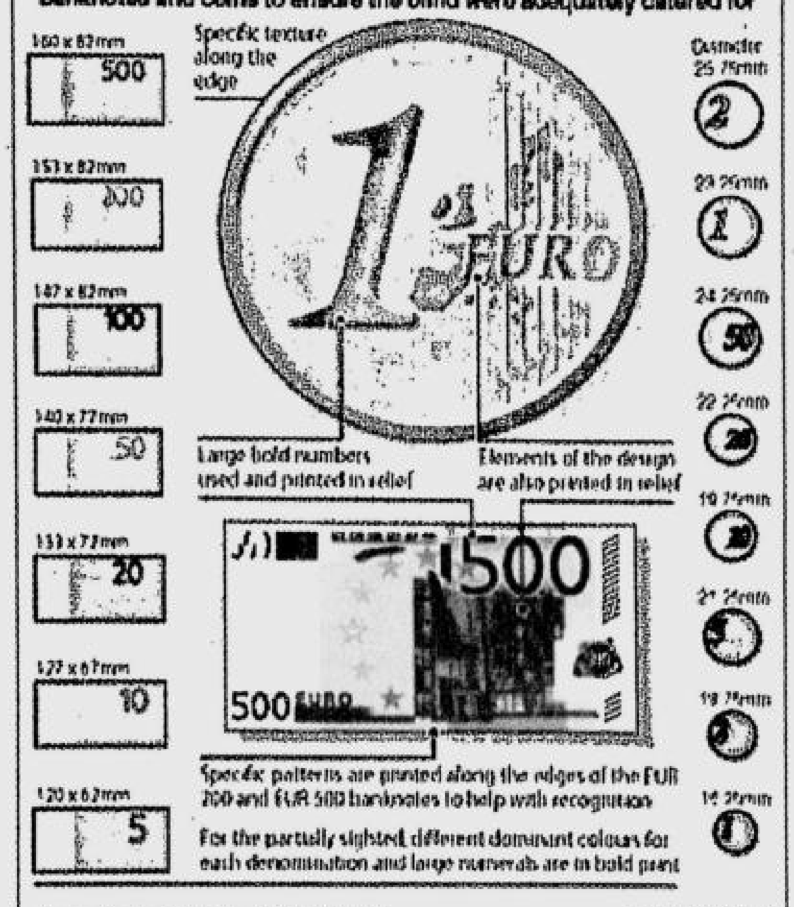
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500
153 x 82mm
200
147 x 82mm
100
140 x 77mm
50
133 x 72mm
20
127 x 67mm
10
120 x 62mm
5
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1 EURO
Large bold numbers used and printed in relief
Elements of the design are also printed in relief
500
500 EURO
Specific patterns are printed along the edges of the EUR 200 and EUR 500 banknotes to help with recognition
For the partially sighted, different dominant colours for each denomination and large numerals are in bold print
Diameter 25.75mm
2
23.25mm
1
24.25mm
50
22.25mm
20
19.75mm
10
21.25mm
5
18.75mm
2
16.25mm
1

Source: Source: www.euro.ecb.int/visible.html

REUTERS

Amgen to acquire Immunex for $16B

WASHINGTON—US biotechnology titan Amgen announced Monday it would take over its hotshot rival Immunex for $16 billion, gaining control of blockbuster arthritis drug Enbrel.

The deal is the biggest ever in the rapidly consolidating biotechnology industry.

Immunex, the fastest-growing biotechnology firm since 1997, has been unable to make Enbrel fast enough to meet demand.

Amgen promised to step up production of the drug.

"This is a compelling strategic transaction and an excellent opportunity for the shareholders, employees and partners of both companies, and we expect it will generate significant benefits for hundreds of thousands of patients around the world," Amgen chairman and chief executive Kevin Sharer said in a joint statement by the two firms.

"We firmly believe that as a result of this combination Enbrel—the fastest growing biologic drug ever—will reach its peak of $3 billion or more in annual sales," he said.

Enbrel works by blocking a human protein, tumor necrosis factor, which in excessive amounts is believed to result in the swelling, pain and other effects of rheumatoid arthritis.

The deal would make Amgen the biotechnology leader in fighting inflammatory diseases, a market possibly worth more than $10 billion, the companies said.

Amgen, which has 7,000 workers, is the world's biggest biotechnology firm with top sellers such as Neupogen, which boosts the number of infection-fighting white blood cells in cancer patients. *AFP*

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Japan economy bottoming out

NEW YORK—The president of Japan's largest brokerage said Monday he saw the Japanese economy bottoming out and an upswing in about 10 months.

"I would say the Japanese economy's probably worst period is either passing or ready to pass," said Nomura Holdings Inc. president Junichi Ujiie at a news conference in New York to announce the listing of Nomura shares on the New York bourse.

Ujiie said the Japanese recovery depended on the US economy's recovery, which he saw as coming in about the next six to eight months.

"The Japanese economic recovery should come around next fall," he said.

Ujiie also noted there had been some positive moves by Japanese companies to rebuild balance sheets.

A spokesperson for Nomura said Ujiie's views were his own and not an official forecast by the company.

Japan held to a downbeat economic assessment in its monthly report Monday, while a key official appeared to give a green light to a weaker yen to help bolster struggling exporters and rekindle growth.

"The economy continues to deteriorate," the government's December economic report said.

That assessment was unchanged from the previous month's and the report pinned Japan's hopes on an export-led recovery. *Reuters*

China told to overhaul preferential tax system

SINGAPORE—China needs to amend its preferential tax policy for foreign-invested enterprises (FIEs) as it undertakes massive reforms after joining the World Trade Organization (WTO), a research report said Tuesday.

Among the proposed reforms is a cut in personal income taxes to unleash the consumption power of China's 1.3 billion people and reduce dependence on infrastructure investments to fuel economic growth, Dutch bank ABN Amro said.

The bank said the reforms should also aim to make the taxation and fee collection system transparent by streamlining the functions of central and local governments where payments are made, it said.

As China charts its way into the mainstream of global commerce after becoming a WTO member on Dec. 11, it needs to review the incentives given to foreign companies in order to protect its domestic industries, ABN Amro said.

Before China's entry into the WTO, foreign companies enjoying tax exemptions were not in direct competition with local companies as they exported their products.

But under the WTO, FIEs are allowed to conduct business in China and compete directly in the domestic market, meaning the tax incentives they currently enjoy can give them an undue advantage over local firms.

"Corporate tax policy in China should be amended. Otherwise domestic enterprises will be in an unfavorable position when competing with FIEs going forward," ABN Amro said.

After relying for years on spending in infrastructure projects to power its spectacular economic growth, China should look at other engines of growth.

"Tax reduction is a more efficient fiscal measure than infrastructure investment under the current economic situation," the bank said, pointing to the sluggish external and private investment demand.

ABN Amro warned the current strategy could result in duplicate or unwanted construction as well as a debt overhang, like what happened between 1992 and 1995. *AFP*

Thai Air board resigns

BANGKOK—Thai Airways International said Tuesday its entire 15-member board had resigned ahead of a shareholder meeting.

The board was appointed only two months ago by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who forced out a former set of directors as part of an attempt to revive the airline after a troubled year.

A Thai Airways spokesperson insisted the mass resignation was "standard procedure" before Thursday's shareholder meeting, where the Finance Ministry, which holds 93 percent of the airline, will pick replacement directors.

But reports said the decision to dismantle the board—the third appointed at the airline this year—was made after three hours of heated discussions at a meeting Wednesday.

"You don't see companies' entire board resigning just to appoint a new CEO or president so it seems pretty unusual, especially given it is the third time this year they have had a reshuffle," said ABN Amro analyst Andrew Maule.

"My guess is there must be some conflict among the board members or between the politicians and the board members."

The Nation newspaper said Tuesday that Thai Airways chair Virabongsa Ramangkura declined to specify the reasons for the resignations, although one-third of the board would have been required to resign anyway as their terms are coming to an end.

The board also agreed Wednesday to invite the three candidates vying for the airline's presidency to make presentations, it said. *AFP*

China, Japan set new talks

BEIJING—China and Japan are set to begin yet another round of talks in an attempt to solve a dragging eight-month long trade dispute, officials from both countries said Tuesday.

The negotiations in Tokyo on Wednesday will come only two days before Japan is due to decide whether the temporary import restrictions on Chinese farming goods which sparked the row should be extended.

China's vice minister at the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (Moftec), Sun Zhen Yu, will head a Chinese delegation to take part in the talks, a Moftec official said.

The meeting follows talks last week in Beijing between China's minister for Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation Shi Guangsheng—who is not attending the new talks—and his Japanese counterpart Takeo Hiranuma and Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Tsutomu Takebe.

"There was an interesting exchange of ideas (at last week's meeting) and we are trying to build on that," a Japanese Embassy official in Beijing said.

The tit-for-tat dispute began in April when Japan slapped 200-day import restrictions on three farm imports—spring onions, shiitake mushrooms and rushes used to make traditional Japanese tatami mats—mostly imported from China. *AFP*

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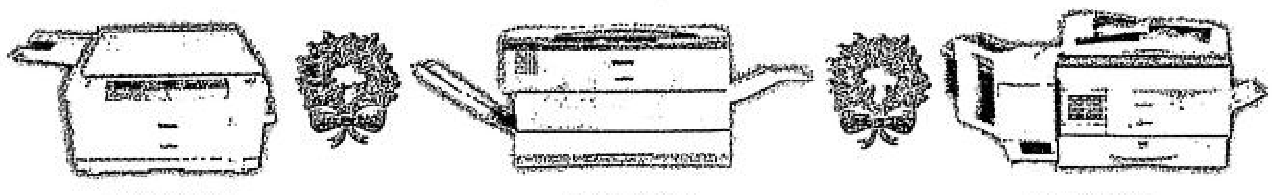

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A6 2.4 Tiptronic	3,075,000	1,537,500	1,537,500
A6 2.4 Tiptronic Quattro,	3,438,500	1,719,250	1,719,250
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Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF QUEZON
MUNICIPALITY OF BUENAVISTA
OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL MAYOR
Agrarian Reform Communities Development Project

INVITATION TO BID

Date: December 19, 2001
World Bank/IBRD Loan No. 4109-PH

The Government of the Philippines has received a loan from the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development towards the cost of the Agrarian Reform Communities Development Project (ARCDP) and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the Contract No. RI RC 01 410 08 BVIL-Q Construction of So. Tulay-So. Dalahay Road located at Brgy. Hagonghong, Buenavista, Quezon Province. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loan and IDA Credits.

The Municipality of Buenavista and implementing partner of the DAR for ARCDP-WB invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the construction of the following sub-project:

Description of the Project: Construction of 1.50 km road.

Item No.	Work Breakdown Structure	Quantity
100	Clearing and grubbing	12,000.00 sq.m.
102	Roadway and Drainage Excavation	9,369.00 cu.m.
103	Structure Excavation	680.00 cu.m.
104	Embankment	358.00 cu.m.
200	Aggregate Sub-base Course	900.00 cu.m.
201	Aggregate Base Course	900.00 cu.m.
311	PCCP	2,180.00 sq.m.
500	R.C. Pipe Culverts	24.00 ln.m.
504	Grouted Riprap	9.00 cu.m.
Spl-a	Lined Canal	273.00 cu.m.

Bid Security: P100,000.00
Bid Closing Date: January 22, 2002, 10:00 AM
Sub-project Duration: 100 C.D.

Minimum Equipment's Required

Dump Trucks, Road Grader, Road Roller (min. 15 ton), Water Truck, Concrete Mixer

A complete set of bidding documents maybe purchased by interested bidders at above office starting **December 21, 2001, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of three thousand five hundred pesos only (P3,500.00).

A Pre-bid Conference will be held on **January 15, 2002 at 10:00 AM** at the Municipal Mayor's Office.

All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in a form of cash, Certified Check, Manager's Check, Bank Draft, or its equivalent in a freely convertible currency, and must be delivered to the Office of the Municipal Mayor, Buenavista, Quezon Province on or before the above bid closing date. Bids will be opened promptly on the above bid closing date in the presence of participating bidders or representatives who choose to attend.

The PBAC-ARCDP reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or formality, assume no obligation whatsoever to compensate idemnity to the contractor/ bidder for any expense that they incur in the preparation of bid to accept the bid lowest evaluated, responsive and comlying bid.

(Sgd.) **HON. RAMON R. REYES**
Chairman, PBAC-ARCDP

(PDI – Dec. 19, 2001)

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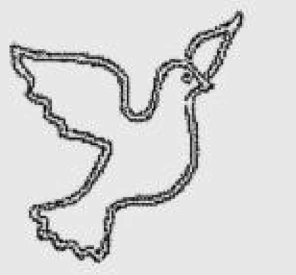

"For what my Father wants is that
all who see the Son and believe in Him should
have eternal life."
John 6:40

Archt. NORBERTO 'PENTS' D. DAVID Sr.

Charter Grand Knight, Knights of Columbus, Sta. Lucia Council LP 08763
Past President, Rotary Club of San Fernando, Pampanga
Past President, Pampango Association of Technologists

Peacefully joined his Creator on 17 December, 2001 at the age of 84.

His wife **Paz Joven-David** (deceased); children **Justino II** and **Virginia**, **Norberto Jr.** and **Purita**, **Rosalinda**, **Joel** and **Peggy**, **Roberto** and **Evelyn**, **Cecilia** and **Armando Paleracio**, **Yolanda** and **Romulo Reyes**.

Second wife **Iluminada**; children **Jocelyn** and **Leonard Benesa**, **Paulita**,

Brothers **Melanio** (deceased), **Leandro** (deceased), **Aurelio** (deceased), **Vicente**, **Alberto** (deceased) and **Angelo**; sisters **Felicidad** (deceased), **Amada Bondoc**, **Loreto Basa**, and their spouses, Cousins, Grandchildren, Great grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Good Shepherd Memorial Park, MacArthur Highway, Dolores, City of San Fernando, Pampanga.

Interment will be on 22 December, 2001, Saturday, at the Catholic Cemetery, City of San Fernando, Pampanga after the celebration of the 8:30 a.m. Holy Mass at the Cathedral of City of San Fernando, Pampanga.

NEDALUZ GUMTANG-CASTILLO, D.M.D.

Davao City

Peacefully joined her Creator
on December 16, 2001 at the age of 38.

Her bereaved husband **Edgardo**; children **Clarence Fitzgerald** and **John Paolo**; father **Melencio A. Gumtang**; sisters **Glenna, Cristina, Rowena & Doreen**; brother **Larry**; and **Auntie Maring**; in-law, nephews, nieces and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the family residence at 7 Gen. Lao Street, Toril, Davao City.

Interment will be announced later.

R. I. P.

LUCINA MARIE C. PANER

of Chicago, Illinois and Calamba City (Laguna)
joined her Creator on December 11, 2001 at the age of 55.

Her loving brothers **Leonardo** and **Popoy**; sisters **Lydia, Zeny** and **Hermy**; sisters-in-law **Adoracion** and **Amelia**; aunt, cousins, nieces and nephews, relatives and friends specially **Evelyn, Cynthia, Mitzh, Rodolfo, Virgil**, and **Mr.** and **Mrs. Larry Long**, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her mortal remains will be arrived on December 20, and will stay at her mother's residence at No. 8, San Juan Street.

Interment is set on Saturday, December 22 at the family graveyard, Calamba Catholic Cemetery after a 2:00 p.m. Mass at St. John the Baptist Parish Church, City of Calamba (Laguna).

The Dominican Fathers and Brothers
and
the University of Santo Tomas
announce the passing away of

FR. JESUS MA. MERINO, O.P.

Former Regent of ROTC, 1953-1958;
Prefect of Libraries, 1954-1963;
Director of Boletin Eclesiastico de Filipinas, 1956-1960;
Dean of the Faculty of Sacred Theology, 1968-1972;
Director of the Museum of Arts and Sciences, 1955-1985·
and Professor Emeritus of Sacred Scriptures

on Tuesday, 18 December 2001.

Funeral Mass at 2:00 p.m.,
on Wednesday, 19 December 2001,
at the University Main Chapel.
Interment follows at the
Dominican Cemetery, Santuario de
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INQUIRER TRiViA

By BONG BARRAMEDA

Root beer

Q. How did 'root beer' get that name, and why does it generate more foam than colas or other soft drinks?

A. Root beer was so named because traditionally it was flavored by extracts from the roots and barks of plants, commonly sassafras. Root beer became popular in the United States in the 1840s, long before the invention of colas. Presumably, the 'beer' in root beer derived from the carbonation and foam head of the soft drink, and from the fact that some of the ancestors of root beer contained alcohol. The foam associated with root beer is linked to proteins in the product, and the most popular brands use yucca and quallia (a tree found in the Andes Mountains of South America). A strong vanilla flavor is added to overpower the slightly bitter taste of these foam-inducing plants. Excluding artificial foaming agents, the higher and longer the foam is likely to form.

For the Record. Beer itself is full of proteins. It takes advantage of the natural proteins in barley or rice to retain its foam head. As you pour your beer (or root beer) into the glass, the 'shock' stretches the proteins and forms a foam.

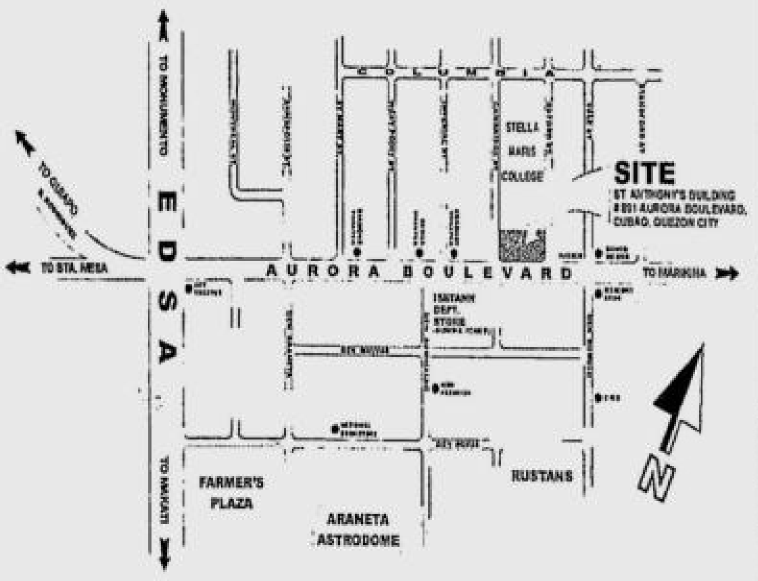
Past Forward. This day in 1987: Garry Kasparov retained his world chess title in Seville, Spain, against Anatoly Karpov. Although the series was tied at 12 games each, Kasparov as defending champion won the title under a new international rule. He first took the crown from Karpov in 1985, becoming the youngest ever world chess champion at age 21.

WORD WATCH

Zugzwang (zoogz vong) : in chess, when any move weakens the player's position.

PDI – December 19, 2001

INQUIRER CLASSIFIEDS



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OBITUARIES

ARISTIDES T. GARCIA, SR.

Died peacefully in the Grace of our Lord on December 18, 2001 at the age of 85.

His bereaved wife **Estrella**; children **Jocelyn** and **Ethelbert Atotubo**, **Rebecca** and **Ernesto Pascual**, **Amabelle** and **Manolito Atotubo**, **Aristides Jr.** and **Nieves Garcia**, **Ruby Ann**, **Gwendoline**, and **Gemma**; grandchildren, brothers, in-laws, relatives and friends request for prayers for his eternal peace and happiness with our Lord.

His remains lie in state at the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels, Sucat, Parañaque City.

Interment will be announced later.

CONSOLIDATED PLANS, INC.

ROLANDO TUBERA PUZON

Former Governor, Kalinga-Apayao
Former Assemblyman, Kalinga-Apayao

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on December 13, 2001 at the age of 58.

His love and affection will be most missed by his bereaved mother **Feliciana**, children **David III**, **Honorio "Ryo"**, **Rolando Jr.**, **Julian "JJ"** and their mother **Evangeline Salvatera**; **Cecile** and daughter **Maricel**, **Tina** and daughter **Lalaine**; brothers and sisters **Dahlia**, **David Jr. & Susay**, **Oscar**, **Romeo**, **Osias & Maridol**, **Felda & Johnny**, **Julie & Lourdes**, **Evelyn & James**, **Olivia**, **Fernando & Emiline** and **Marco**, relatives and friends.

His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

He will be laid to rest at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City on Thursday, December 20, 2001 after the 9:00 a.m. service at La Funeraria Paz.

CIPRIANO (POPSING) CORTEZ MALONZO

Builder of churches and builder of unions

Joined the Great Builder on December 17, 2001 at the age of 89.

Basilla (Momsing) Avelino Malonzo; their children **Ruben** and **Esther Rendal Malonzo**, **Aida Malonzo**, **Eunice** and **Ricardo Sario**, **Ibarra Malonzo** and **Jurgette Honculaca**, **Luz Malonzo-Dial**, **Miriam Malonzo vda. de Tagle**, **Ruth Malonzo**; and siblings, grandchildren and other kin ask those whose lives have been touched by Popsing to say a prayer or keep a moment of silence.

His remains will lie in state at the Church on the Hill, UCCP compound, Don Vicente Street, Batasan Hills, Quezon City until December 20, memorial services will be held at 7:00 o'clock every evening. He will be moved to Angeles City Aldersgate Methodist Church, December 21 for burial at the Holy Mary Memorial Park on December 22, 2001 at 8:00 AM. In lieu of flowers, donations to the Church on the Hill Building Fund will be appreciated.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord"
2 Corinthians 5:8

Our dearly beloved mother former Brgy. Captain

ZENONA "Nonay" Mejia Vda. de LABUGUEN

Peacefully joined our Lord on December 16, 2001 at the age of 85.

Her late husband **Ret. Col. Jesus T. Labuguen Sr.** (†); loving children and in-laws **Lilia** and **Stanley**, **Jesus Jr.** and **Louella**, **Arturo** and **Susan**, **Damasito** and **Luisa**, **Victoria** and **Otfried**, and **Lorna**; grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal rest of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at their residence at #60 Evangelista Street, Santolan, Pasig City.

Interment will be at Santolan Cemetery (to be announced later) for further details please contact Tel. No. 646-4881.

"Whoever serves Me must follow Me! And where I am, My servant also will be!" John 12:16

CONSUELO "CHIT" CASTAÑEDA CAILLES

Her loving son **Chito**; and daughter-in-law **Lila**; sisters **Nina**, **Annie**, **Espie**; brothers-in-law **Noring** (†) and **Ed**; nephews and nieces, relatives and friends, request the pious readers to join them in praying for the eternal repose and happiness of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at The Our Lady of Mount Carmel Hall, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Shrine Parish, Fourth Street, New Manila, Quezon City.

The Concelebrated Funeral Mass will be held on Saturday, December 22, 2001 at 12 noon. The main celebrant will be Bishop Socrates B. Villegas, D.D.

Interment will follow immediately at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

In lieu of flowers, monetary donations will be accepted for The Commission on the Clergy, Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines c/o Bishop Rosales, D.D.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

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PEOPLE at WORK

RAUL O. MARCELO, Editor ■ REGINA GALANG REYES, Subsection Editor

Debt diminishes joy of work

BY TITA DATU PUANGCO

Advice
FOR THE ANXIOUS PERSON AT WORK

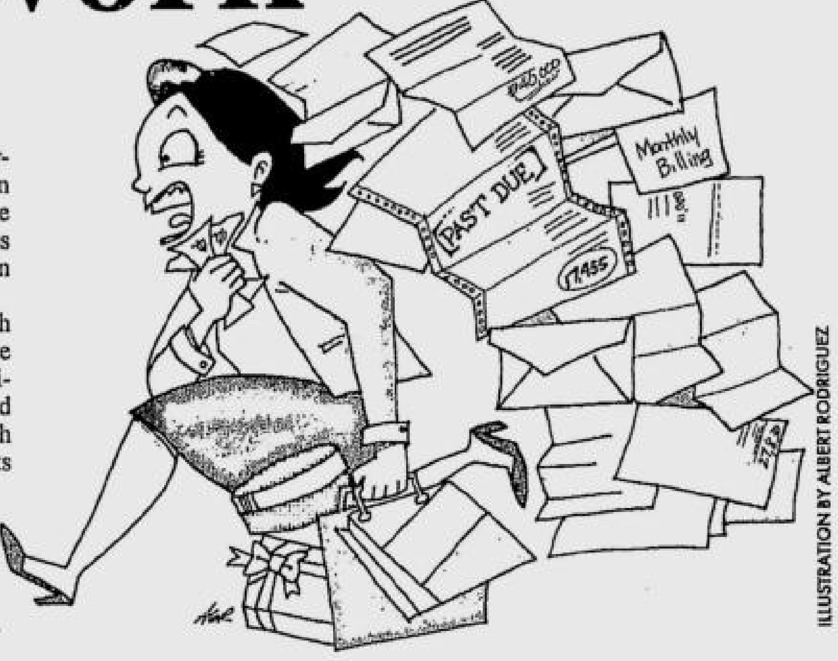
ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

I DON'T feel like going to work even though my work is challenging. The main reason is my take-home pay at the end of the month is so small due to credit card debts. I can't resist the temptation to shop. I only pay the interest each month and I have seen my charges balloon. It seems like I will be in debt for a lifetime. My husband has noticed that I am not able to pay for my share of household expenses. This is starting to strain our relationship. I am very discouraged. Please tell me what to do.

Discouraged Manager

The best way to use a credit card is to pay all the charges when they become due. If you don't, then card charges with interest are heaped on you. These cause the ballooning of your credit card debt.

However, since you do not have the discipline to hold on to a card, I suggest a very radical solution. Get a pair of scissors and cut up your cards. Then, write the credit card companies that you are formally and definitely canceling your cards. Without a credit card, you will then be forced to pay in cash. Paying in cash will force you to face up to the real situation.

Use credit wisely

This is a situation that many people find themselves in because they spend money that is yet to be earned. My late father used to say, "It is not how much you earn that matters; it is how much you save from what you earn."

It is sad to note that our country has one of the lowest savings rates in Asia. This suggests that most working people spend more than they earn. Or spend money through easy credit even before they earn it.

Set an appointment with the credit card company and come clean about your financial condition. Tell them what you can afford to pay each month so they can restructure your debt to something more manageable. This is the only way that you can live a life without debt.

Afterwards, confide in your spouse. Difficult moments are times for getting closer rather than growing apart. Together, you might be able to work out a way to reduce your credit card debt. He may agree for you to get a loan less taxing than the interest imposed by credit card companies. He may be more sympathetic and willing to negotiate on your obligations to the family budget, while you are servicing your debts. Together with him, develop a new written budget, reflective of your tight situation. Then stick to the budget.

Avoid the malls. Many people allow themselves to be tempted by frequenting the malls. But you may argue that it is Christmas and it is only proper for you to shop. But remember, what you spend now in credit will hound you in 2002. If you insist, make sure you are not enticed by the offers to sign up for yet another credit card. Someone I know accepts all cards offered to him. He has started rotating the use of his credit cards ending up with not just one ballooning account but several accounts. He now has a big headache.

Check consumerism

Let us examine what is underneath the shopping binge. It is an insatiable desire to buy and consume things, even things that one does not really need. This is the modern sickness called consumerism.

I once visited a house in a rich village and the lady of the house showed me rows and rows of cabinets filled with things bought abroad and locally. She paraded them with pride, like a peacock showing its feathers. After a week, I heard that the rich woman had a stroke and died. Everything had all been senseless. It is ironic that the rich in our country can live in such luxury when 70 percent of the Filipino population lives in misery.

I am a strong believer in voluntary simplicity. Chiara Lubich, the founder of the Focolare Movement says, "The things that you do not use belongs to your brother in need." If every person in the country takes and consumes only what he/she needs, then there will be fewer people in need.

I propose a simple formula before you buy that attractive item you see in the mall. Ask yourself three questions. One, do you need it? Two, can you afford it? Three, is it right for you to buy it? If you can answer yes to these questions, then buy it. If not, you are better off without it.

Communion of goods

A better alternative to shopping is a practice we have in our office called "the communion of goods." Every quarter, we bring to work things we do not use and put them in communion. Someone's surplus can be somebody else's treasure. Then everything that is left is sent to social centers that help poor families. This practice has allowed us substantial savings and in addition helps build a family atmosphere at work.

Accept the consequences of your reckless use of cards. Take the heat, sacrifice not going shopping and indulging in things you want but do not need. Live within your means. Go for voluntary simplicity. Stick to your budget. After paying your dues, you will experience freedom from debt. Then surely, you will start to enjoy the fruits of your labor and enjoy your work more.

With the New Year, let us renew our resolve to balance our finances and attain peace of mind.

(Ms Puangco is CEO and president of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send comments, feedback or requests for advice through e-mail to ancillaedc@pacific.net.ph *or fax to 892-2902.)*

People-friendly collector turns bad accounts into good customers

BY CECILE GARCIA

CAREER Tales

HAVE you ever tried getting back money owed you? Definitely not easy. This is why a collection officer's job is often downright hard. "The responsibility can be awesome," notes Frankie Guiang. Guiang, 39, works as collection officer for Smart's Credit and Collection (recovery management group). He has been with the company for over six years.

"Some people simply do not want to pay. We lose track of a great number of them when they change addresses or acquire different cell phones," says Guiang. The bitter truth, he laments, is that companies like Smart lose millions in revenues due to bad accounts.

Patience, he adds, is a primary requirement. It also happens to be one of his basic assets.

Working abroad

Guiang, a business management graduate of San Beda College, migrated to the US in 1985 and was employed at Telmark & Kaegan, a Jewish law firm in New York City specializing in collection, from 1986 to 1988. He considers the experience invaluable. "I started as a clerk. I would prepare demand letters, make calls and review accounts. At that time, we were handling a lot of bad accounts from hospitals. Hopeless cases were turned over to us."

In one time, Guiang was transferred to collection and subsequently became supervisor for billing. "Early on, I learned the value of perseverance and hard work," he says. Though he could have stayed on in New York and continued working with Telmark & Kaegan, then a growing firm (later on, it became one of the top collection agencies in New York), Guiang decided to come home. "I wanted to be on my own," he says.

Smart move

In 1995, Guiang moved to Smart. Initially, he was sent to Davao where he was designated to handle the company's credit and collection in the area. Prior to returning to Manila in 1999, he was handling not only Davao but the entire Mindanao region as well. "It was manageable because there weren't too many account holders then," says Guiang. His job was virtually the same: following up delinquent accounts.

For a collection officer, delinquent accounts are the stuff of nightmares. These are daily fare for Guiang. "Our group, recovery management, is the end of the line, some kind of court of last resort. Accounts are sent to us when all other efforts to settle them have been exhausted," he says.

Bargaining

Following the usual procedure, explains Guiang, these so-called bad or delinquent accounts are endorsed to collection agencies who in turn write to errant subscribers. This may be done over a period of time as the agencies send demand letters repeatedly. "Meanwhile, subscribers call us to inquire," says Guiang. "They try to explain why they haven't paid. Our aim of course is to work out a reasonable agreement with them and to settle the account."

To achieve this, Guiang points out, the collection officer usually asks the subscriber to formulate his own proposal. "But, more often than not, what he wants is not workable. In this case, I tell him what is acceptable to the company. Haggling and bargaining take place as a timeframe is decided on."

PHOTO BY JOHNNY VILLENA

GUIANG

People skills

Usually, a seasoned collection officer like Guiang can tell who is honest and sincere and who is not. "This comes with people skills. In time, you develop a keen sense with regards to people. You learn to gauge their intentions," says Guiang. It's important to listen, he adds.

Guiang says he always assumes there's a reason for a client's angry outburst. "I wait for him to simmer down and then I try to explain the company's position." Whichever way negotiations go, Guiang keeps an open mind. "You have to be flexible," he observes.

Again, it boils down to people skills. Guiang is generally good with people.

Bad news

This balancing act can be tricky, says Guiang, especially when you have to deliver the bad news. "The company does not make empty threats. We do bring people to court." A case is filed when a client does not respond and refuses to settle, or responds, makes a commitment and reneges. Filing a suit, Guiang clarifies, is done upon recommendation of a collection agency trhough its lawyers. The head of recovery management group gives the go-signal.

Guiang contends that one of the most difficult aspects of his job is dealing with errant clients, who would like to pay but have no capacity. "You have to tell them what to expect in a firm yet non-threatening way." Through situations like this can be disheartening, thankfully they seldom occur.

Upside

As in everything, there is an upside. Aside from the challenge of working on targets—"We aim to meet or surpass them"—there's the satisfaction that comes from doing your job well and giving it your best shot. "In our work," says Guiang, "what is most rewarding is being able to collect for the company, while making clients realize that we are not an enemy."

What can you do if somebody else gets your promotion?

WORKING WOUNDED

By Bob Rosner

DEAR WW: I've risen quickly to middle management but now I feel stuck. Someone else just got the promotion I wanted and I'm wondering what I'm doing wrong.

Fallen Off the Escalator

Let me tell you about the time my wife climbed Mt. Elbert. It's the tallest mountain in Colorado, and as they drove to the trailhead, Robin and her climbing partner debated the merits of reaching the top. Bernie felt reaching the top was essential: surpassing their physical limits would be life transforming. Robin said no, she was going for the view: she'd stop halfway up and await his return. The debate continued—between huffs and puffs—three-fourths of the way up the mountain. Finally, Robin called it quits. "You'll be sorry tomorrow," Bernie admonished. Just then, a teenage girl scampered past. "See ya' at the top," she hollered. Robin glared after her. "Darn it," she growled, "If she can do it, I can do it." And leaving Bernie staring, she headed off toward the summit.

Which just goes to show that even the stuckest climber can reach the top if she puts her mind to doing so. For advice on coming unstuck in the workplace, I turned to Judith Bardwick's book, "The Plateauing Trap" (Bantam, 1988).

Bardwick maintains that there are three different ways to be stuck, and that to renew your ascent you need to know which kind of "stuck" you are.

1. Have you lost your passion for your job? This is like Robin on the mountain. She didn't have the fire necessary to reach the top—until that girl ran past her. That's also what happens to many of us at work: we get comfortable and complacent. When that happens we need to find ways to make our jobs "new" again, to rekindle the passion that got us there in the first place. Volunteer for new, more challenging assignments. Take more risks. Strike off on new trails and stop playing it safe.

2. Are there simply too few advancement opportunities at your company? Sight down the trail ahead of you and see if the summit is really scalable. Perhaps there are too many qualified candidates. Perhaps they don't let women or minorities onto the upper peaks. If the obstacles are great, you may be better off continuing your climb elsewhere.

3. Are your skills—or attitudes—out of date? Are you following the advice of a mentor who's from the old school? Are you waiting for new technologies to prove themselves before leaping aboard? Are you watching young bucks with the latest training snatch up the promotions? You wouldn't climb Everest with outdated gear, so why do so at work?

4. Is your personal life in a crevasse? Malaise at home can slow you down on the mountain. Try fixing those problems, and see if it speeds your career.

There's only one thing worse than never achieving your dreams and that is giving up too early. Hopefully these tips will help you reach the pinnacle of your industry.

Here are the results of our last workingwounded.com/ABCnews.com poll: How does your job/career feel?

—Like a hot air balloon, 13.9%
—Like a ball and chain, 42.3%
—Like the bunny hop (two steps forward, one step back), 43.6%

Our winning strategy on how to deal with feeling stuck at work comes from Pam M. in Raleigh, North Carolina. "I worry that you are contributing to 'the big myth:' faster, higher and more is better. I am seeing more and more of them in my practice as they become hospitalized for depression. My message: I applaud the woman in your column who climbed just for the view. Too bad she became seduced by hollow competition. Don't let the 'the big myth' destroy you. It is cunning and insidious. Above all, seek balance."

(E-mail feedback to bob@workingwounded.com.*)*

Soul of life lies in the paradox of time

RECIPES for LEARNING

By Moje Ramos-Aquino

ANIM na tulog na lang at Pasko na. Are you ready to celebrate Jesus' birthday?

Six days. And you are now in a crisis mode. You think you don't have enough time to earn more money, do shopping, visit loved ones, go to church, prepare the *noche buena*, complete your tasks, attend all the parties, etc. You are ready to do a Scrooge and just flop into your bed and forget Christmas. Whoever invented Christmas! Bah, humbug!

Indeed this is a critical situation when you realize that, ready or not, Christmas will be here in exactly six days. This is a startling fact about time—there isn't any more of it. Each of us already has all the time there is. This is the paradox of time: few people have enough, yet everyone has all there is.

Lessons

Time is one thing that all of us have exactly the same amount. Thus, the problem is not time per se. The problem lies within ourselves. It is not how much time we have but rather what we do with the time we have. And, therefore, we now conclude our Workshop on Time Management to Enjoy Christmas and Get Ready for the New Year. Here is a summary of all the lessons we had on the subject of time.

First of all, do you really need money to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ? Do you really need to eat special food, wear new clothes and shoes, have all those parties, give material gifts, and use fancy and expensive decorations to have a merry Christmas? Do you really have to do all these at this time only? Can't you do them some other time spread over the whole year? Do you have to put undue pressure on yourself just to experience the joys of Christmas? Can't you keep and celebrate Christmas everyday of the year and avoid the so-called Christmas rush?

Crisis

You seem to find yourself in a crisis situation a lot of times not only during the Christmas season. You seem to be always running out of time, running in circles, running at cross purposes. These are brought about by your wasteful use of time and negative traits such as:

- Lack of personal vision, mission, values and goals
- Not minding organizational vision, mission, values and goals
- Lack of objectives, priorities and action plans
- Improper use of telephone
- Ineffective process for handling paperwork
- Over-attentiveness to drop-in visitors
- Attempting to do too much
- Succumbing to visual distractions, noise
- Wanting all the facts
- Procrastination
- Indecision
- Inability to say "no"
- Unproductive meetings
- Personal disorganization/cluttered work area
- Untrained/inadequate staff
- Lack of/unclear communication
- Incomplete/delayed information
- Leaving tasks unfinished
- Poor filing system
- Ineffective or no delegation
- Crisis mentality
- Feeding negative emotions
- Perfectionism
- Excessive tension
- Insecurity
- Culture of complaining, blaming
- Inability to distinguish between the urgent and the important
- Inability to pro-act and prevent fires instead of fighting them.

Guidelines

Getting things done in less time requires purposiveness, self-discipline and positive attitude. Here are some helpful guidelines to help you manage yourself and your time.

- Focus on your personal vision, mission, values and big life goals.
- Understand your organization's business, culture and processes.
- Take one day at a time.
- Do it now.
- Establish and concentrate on the important and essential.
- Set objectives and make a "to do" list.
- Motivate yourself.
- Honor your commitments.
- Establish deadlines.
- Be decisive.
- Learn to say "no."
- Have paper and pencil ready all the time.
- Discourage interruptions.
- Listen actively.
- Be creative and resourceful.
- Review and streamline routine chores.
- Anticipate.
- Police the time at your disposal.
- Eat well, have enough sleep, avoid bad habits.
- Get an early start.
- Cultivate a healthy respect for your own time and the time of others.

Christmas everyday

It is a sobering and heartwarming thought that Christmas Day comes once a year every Dec. 25 and the New Year every Jan. 1. And that we could actually celebrate Christmas 365 days a year.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote: "What is time? The shadow on the dial, the striking of the clock, the running of the sand—day and night, summer and winter, months, years, centuries—these are but arbitrary and outward signs, the measures of time, not time itself. Time is the life of the soul."

The best way to enjoy Christmas is to remember that it is to celebrate the birth of Jesus in a lowly manger in a stable. He was wrapped in swaddling cloth.

Merry Christmas and may you enjoy the time of your life always!

(Send feedback to *Moje.Ramos@Aquino.ZZN.com*)

I-Gate: Now the country's strongest link to the Internet!

A year after it was launched, PLDT's I-Gate has the Philippines' biggest bandwidth to the Internet and has successfully attracted a wide base of customers. Internet Service Providers (ISPs), corporate Intranets, educational institutions, as well as government institutions, are now fully linked to the global Internet through I-Gate's infra-structure capabilities.

According to Mr. Al S. Panlilio, PLDT Senior Vice-President for Corporate Business Group, "major customers like Infocom, Easycall, Innodata, Amkor Anam, ComClark, CURE, Inc., NESIC / Halliburton, University of Santo Tomas and Gregorio Araneta Foundation, are running business, Internet-based transactions and services, powered by I-Gate's high-speed, reliable and managed connectivity to the Internet."

When it was first introduced, I-Gate had an initial 45 Mbps (DS3) to the Palo Alto Internet Exchange (PAIX) using transoceanic fiber optic cable connection. At PAIX, it had several peering arrangements with large ISPs - Verio, UUNET and Teleglobe and more than 10 US ISPs. In addition, I-Gate had an individual direct connection to 7 Asia Pacific countries - Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia - and a direct connection to the Philippine Internet Exchange (PhIX).

"Today", adds Ms. Nerisse S. Ramos, Assistant Vice-President for Business Solutions, "owing to various acquisitions and the development of our infrastructure, I-Gate has a total bandwidth of 155 Mbps, the biggest bandwidth to the worldwide web using a fiber optic cable system, this does not even include the Asia Pacific regional bandwidth of 5.12 Mbps. This proves PLDT's commitment to the advancement of Information and Communication Technology in the country by providing effective and suitable solutions to the need for Internet connectivity."

With the advent of numerous web-based applications that require bigger bandwidth and real-time usage, service providers must be able to support these requirements in the shortest time possible. Having the biggest bandwidth to the global Internet, particularly to the US, made PLDT the leading provider of what customers want - end-to-end quality service and a quick response to deliver services.

I-Gate is the Philippines' strongest link to the Internet!

The I-Gate Calendar

Launch 2000 - Initial 45Mbps (DS3) to Palo Alto Internet Exchange (PAIX). Peering arrangements with large ISPs - Verio, UUNET, Teleglobe and more than 10 US ISPs. Individual direct connection to Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, Korea, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia plus a direct connection to Philippine Internet Exchange (PhIX)

August 2001 - Established 20 Mbps connection using PLDT's GPOP (Global Point of Presence) to connect to Verio at Wilshire, US.

September 2001 - Implemented the 2nd DS3 directly connected to Teleglobe. The cable system used is the GP/China-US fiber optic cable system, effectively making the total I-Gate bandwidth to the Internet at 110 Mbps.

December 2001 - Established 3rd DS3 to PAIX using a separate cable system which effectively provides Internet traffic diversity. I-Gate Internet bandwidth is now the biggest in the country at 155 Mbps.

The bandwidth that others can offer is not even half of what we have

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now at 155 Mbps

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For more information about PLDT I-Gate, please call 1-800-1888-0007 or fax 844-8000 or email at BusinessSolns@pldt.com.ph

PLDT BUSINESS SOLUTIONS
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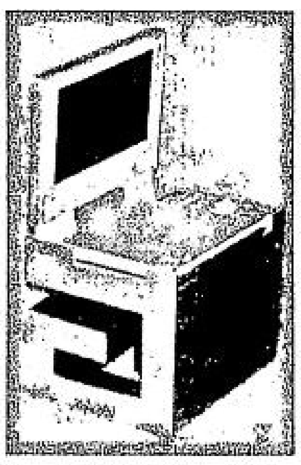
For feedback or suggestions ls_2bu@inquirer.com.ph

LIFESTYLE

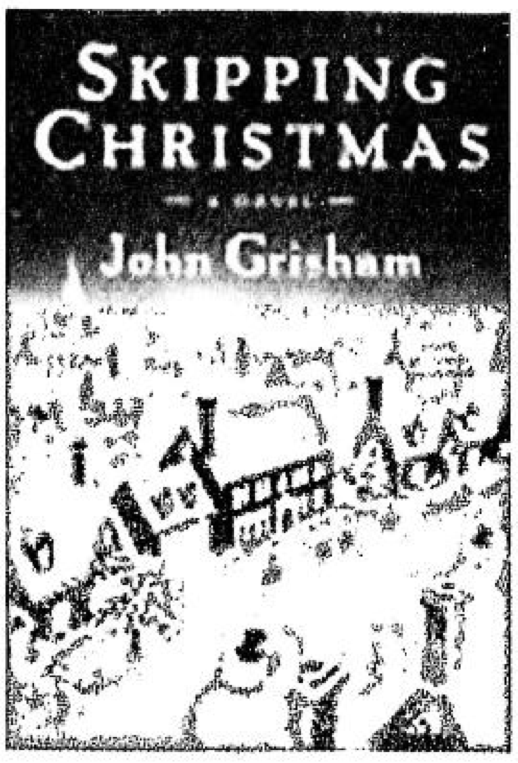
CHELO BANAL-FORMOSO, Editor ■ PAM PASTOR, Chief of Correspondents

A MERRY MELANGE AND A HAPPY JUMBLE

Christmas websites and last-minute shopping tips—plus exciting pieces on the Norwegian teen duo M2M, the MTV Asia Awards, everyone's favorite MTV lass Donita Rose, brewing whiskey the true-blue Scottish way, best-selling motivational author Andrew Matthews and Pinoy hip-hop gadfly D-coy—make for a wild miscellany of features to make your Yuletide smashingly varied and pulsing



Jacobo's Ghost



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What to get on the last two minutes of CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

If you're trying to save, get creative and think about what your loved ones will really appreciate

By Jules Alcantara

IF you haven't done your shopping—not even prepared a list—with only six more days to go before Christmas, then this should really be a good time to panic. But in the spirit of the season, we asked some of the top glossy magazine editors in the country for shopping tips so you don't have to go crazy just thinking how you can get things done in less than a week.

Maya Calica
Editor in chief, Seventeen magazine

If you're trying to save (who isn't), now's the time to get creative and think about what your loved ones will really appreciate. Of course, you'll need to match the gift with the recipient's personality, so narrow down your list to those that really really count.

- Personalize it. Not just with his/her name, but with a unique symbol that proclaims it's from you. A picture frame can have a photo your *barkada* has never seen or your own painting. Scribble a message or doodle a drawing on a scrapbook.
- Do it yourself. Check magazines or books for ways to make special gifts like candles, lip balm, votive candle holders, even jewelry. Knowing you handcrafted it will elicit "oohs" and "aahs" from recipients. Although this requires more of your time than going to the mall, it will also cost you less. If you have the time and energy, go for it.
- Do an Oprah... and give the gift of your time and friendship. One Christmas, my friend Auceie gave me a greeting card with a Starbucks coaster and a message that said, "You can claim a cup of coffee and *chica* with this!" The gift was time well spent with her (the latte was a bonus). You can try making your own gift checks on your computer for gifts like "free movie and popcorn" or "one do-anything date" for the special people in your life.
- Make a gift basket. This is much cheaper than buying the prearranged baskets. Think up themes for each of your loved ones. Does mom need pampering? Give her a basket containing foot lotion, massage oil, scented candle and a cool cotton robe. Scour *tiangges* and malls for things you can put together. This can be really fun, but you have to know what your family and friends need.
- Give the gift that keeps on giving. Buy cards supporting a cause, such as Unicef (United Nations Children's Fund) or Professionals Actively Responding Today (PART), a volunteer placement program (to order Christmas cards, text (0917) 929-9973). Help make a difference in your parish, church, family. Every year, my family hosts the "Calica kitchen" wherein we give away *noche buena* packs consisting of sandwich, drink and candy to less-privileged kids who come caroling on Dec. 24. It's not a major undertaking, but seeing the happy faces on the kids light us up like a Christmas tree.

Pauline Suaco
Editor, Preview

- Everyone loves to be pampered, especially for free. Gift certificates for a body massage (the Oriental Spa at the Mandarin or Discovery Suites' spa is a good choice), facial (at the Institut Clarins), a manicure and pedicure (at the Nail Spa) are great for those that are always on the run.
- Anything from the Burt's Bees line (at Beauty Bar). It's a great beauty line and the products work (!) and smell great.
- People are tired of giving and receiving candles so the trick is not to give just any old candle. Look for a stylish one that will enhance the look of a room. Those from Candle with Care (at Rustan's) and Cereo (Glorietta) are fab.
- Handmade soaps are good because you can actually use them. (They don't sit on your shelves 'til kingdom come.) A bathroom treat would be to lay out two to three kinds for you to choose from every time you take a shower. The selections from Fresh (Glorietta) and Lush (Glorietta and Rockwell) are rockin'.
- Shoes! Girls can't get enough of shoes. Celine and Via Venetto are the places to go to. But you should also check out the collection from Mendrez, Cardams and Le Donne. They've come up with modern styles that are easy on the budget.

Mia Fausto
Editor, Candymag

"It's cliché but it's true—that you shouldn't look at the price of a gift. I also think we should do away with the usual candles, mugs and picture frames. Put a lot of thought in choosing a gift. Try to find something that the recipient would like. Ask yourself, 'Is this something I'd also like to receive?'

What's also nice as gifts are stuff people wouldn't think of buying but wouldn't mind having like:

- Personalized gift tags—These are something I'd like to receive myself and they're perfect for both men and women. They're very useful. You can even make them yourself with your computer.
- Loot bags with candies—These are what I like to call a "gift for the soul." I got one last year and I'd like to recommend it for couples (boyfriend and girlfriend). Go to the grocery and buy candies and tiny plastic bags. Fill the plastic bags with assorted candies and tie them with ribbons. Put several bags in one big bag to give to a couple, with an instruction to give a bag each time a street child knocks on their car window. Kids always like candies. It feels good to give and to know that your gift also makes a child happy.
- Personal slum book—I saw this at PowerBooks. I'd like to call it a personal slum book. Its pages say, among others, "My happiest moment was when...," "I find myself prettiest whenever I wear...," "The best compliment I ever got was...." I think it's called a self-esteem journal, but I'd like to call it a personal slum book. It's like making your own time capsule. When you're old and gray, it will be very enjoyable and enlightening to read. Once you have it, you'd want to fill it out with information.
- Personalized CD—It's so *gasgas*, but then again Filipinos are music lovers so it would be nice to give someone a personalized CD of her favorite songs. It doesn't matter if she has copies of all the songs. It's different having all her favorite songs in one CD.
- Personal call and greeting—If you have time, personally call and greet your friends on Christmas Day. What's P6 if your call will make someone happy?

Another tip is to wrap your gift very nicely. It increases the gift's value and shows that you also put a lot of thought and effort to it. Besides, experimenting with different types of wrapping and packaging is always fun to do.

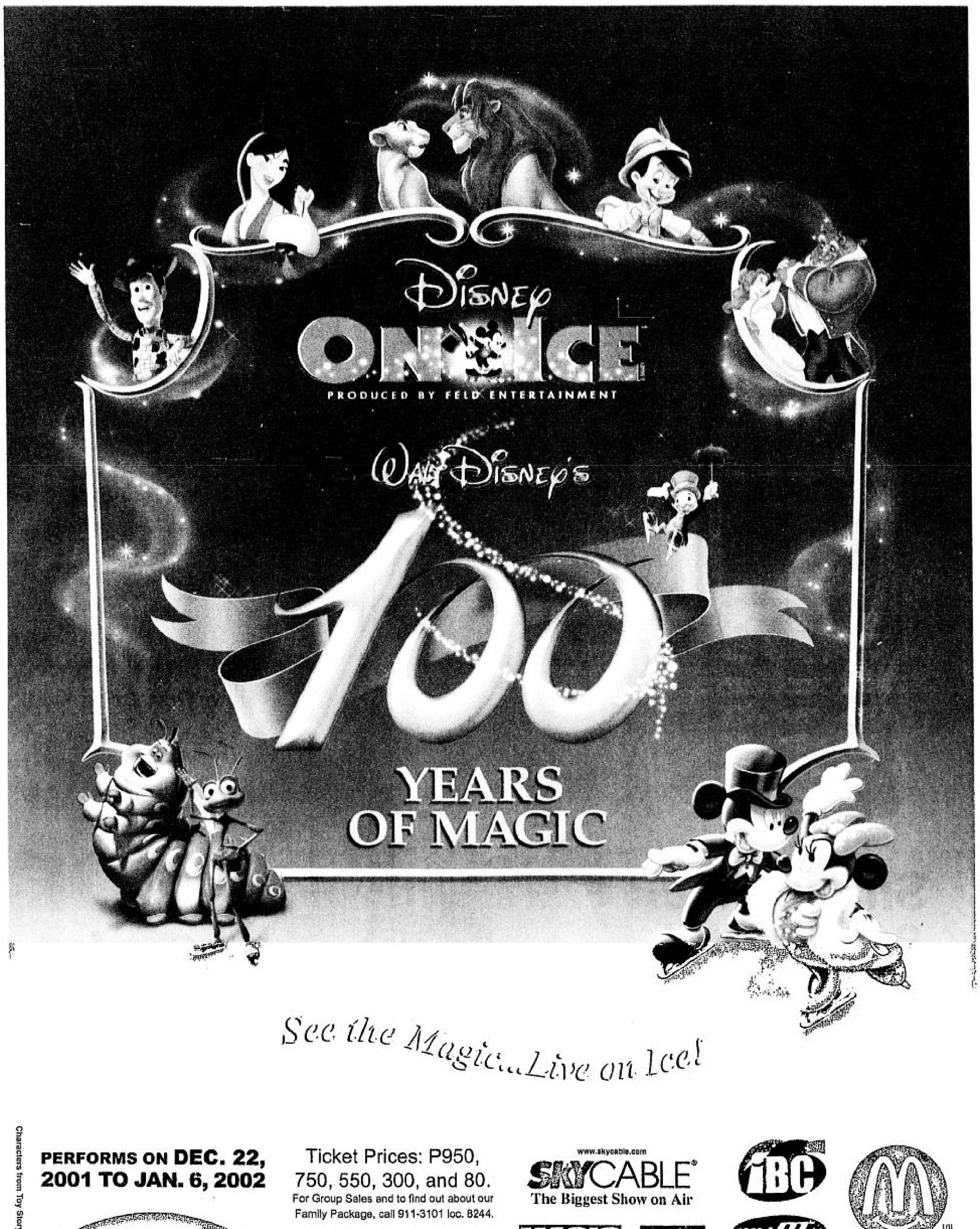
Pierra Calasanz
Associate Editor, Meg Magazine

Shopping for other people is quite an art. Here are some ideas that show more heart than the last-minute paperweight or picture frame.

- Tried-and-tested—The latest or greatest hits CD of your bud's fave band, like Backstreet Boys, The Corrs or Rivermaya...
- For the gals—Trendy dangling earrings are the easy, inexpensive yet appreciated champion gift idea this year... Check out cute kiosks like The Bead Shop, Silverworks, Jammin' Gems, Axxezz and bazaar finds like Avatar Accessories.
- More for the gals—Fill a cute purse (a gift in itself—check out ISHQ) with one or more vanity items like yummy-smelling Baby Bench cologne, good-enough-to-eat lotion from Beauty Bar, Essences, The Body Shop and Origins, de-stressing soothing bath gels, cheap but cute lip gloss and the fantastic MAC lip gloss (your pal will love you forever). Just for fun, throw in a pair of fluffy slippers you can get super cheap at department stores.
- I stole this idea from Carlo Ledesma: For a special person, play Santa and fill a sack with personalized stuff like a tee with a suitable slogan, a personalized CD compilation ('80s music, perhaps?), a fave snack like a giant bag of M&M's, a treasured childhood book like "The Little Prince" or "The Velveteen Rabbit," fun comic book like Calvin and Hobbes, an item connected to the recipient's sport or hobby, the VHS or DVD of an all-time fave movie, or a coveted item like a special edition Darth Vader light saber. Get creative!
- If you've run out of shopping time and you refuse to settle for a generic paperweight (good for you!), you can give the recipient an I.O.U.—your own personalized gift certificate, complete with shopping date and budget. That way, your friend will get exactly what s/he likes, and you'll both have fun shopping for it, too!

Well don't just sit there! Hurry! Go, go, go!

For more tips on last-minute Christmas shopping, panic and e-mail jules_alcantara@pinoycentral.com



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Characters from Toy Story and A Bug's Life © Disney/ Pixar

December makes singleness not so blessed

BY NIÑO MARK M. SABLAN
2bU! Correspondent

COLDER than the treatment you get from a friend after you've done something you shouldn't have, more freezing than dancing to "She Bangs" inside an igloo with not a stitch on, and more arctic than cuddling Frosty the Snowman is the coldness a single person feels when December draws near.

There's just something about the Christmas season in general that fuels despair. Wherever you look it seems as if people are all in pairs—walking, strolling, shopping, eating, watching an R-18 movie. Even more despairing is how they all seem to be deliberately making you feel like a worthless troglodyte destined to be ugly and alone all your life.

You feel as if everybody else is romantically sharing *puto bumbong* with another while you can't even find a store that sells the native delicacy. All of a sudden, the urge to get hitched or just be with someone intensifies as if your biological clock is run by gallons of steaming hot *kapeng barako* fresh from Batangas. And no matter what other people say, no matter how well meaning their intentions are, orphans, vagabonds, beggars, charity cases, even parents, friends or cute adorable little children just cannot fill up the void created by the lack of a companion.

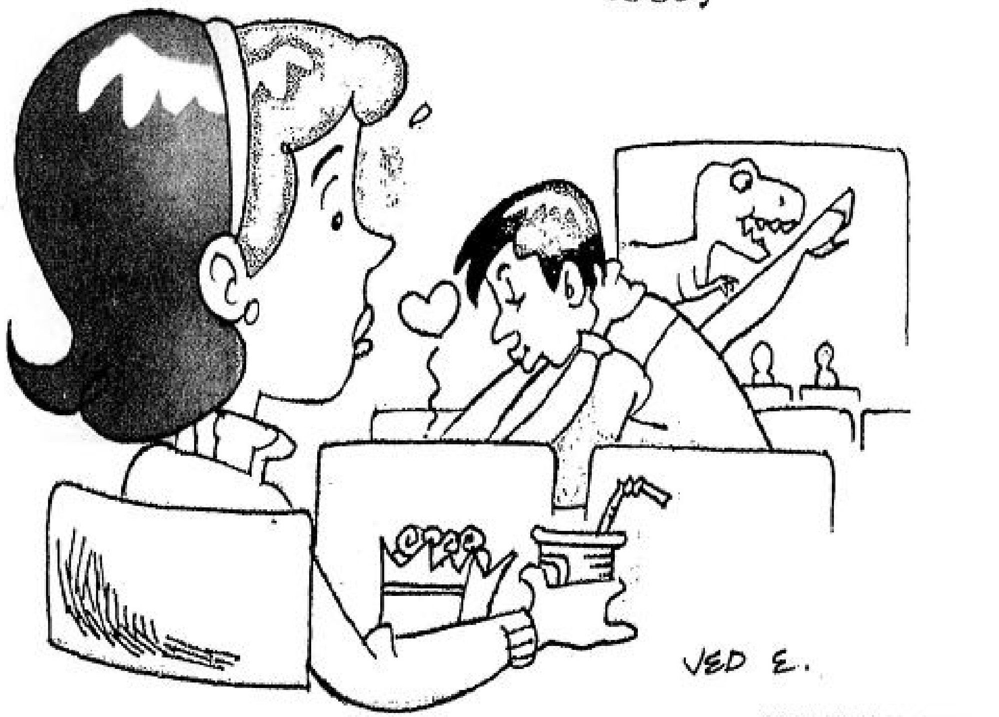
Of course, there's a different kind of fulfillment you get from being a Santa. But there are moments when you would rather be Ms Santa—a partner, a lover, a sweetheart, the other half, the One. I'm running out of synonyms and the Thesaurus is nowhere in sight.

The ghosts of Halloween are growing angel wings and I'm starting to put little Santa hats on my paper bat decor. Christmas is fast approaching but some things just stay the same. Some people just stay single.

The evening breeze is getting colder every day. All alone in my bedroom, I hug myself a bit tighter than I did the night before. No one's there to hug me but myself. I should be feeling sad but I'm not.

I'm sure I'm not the only one who feels cold. I know I'm not alone in being alone, especially this Christmas season.

> Rather than being Santa, you'd rather be Ms Santa—a partner, a lover, a sweetheart, the other half, the One



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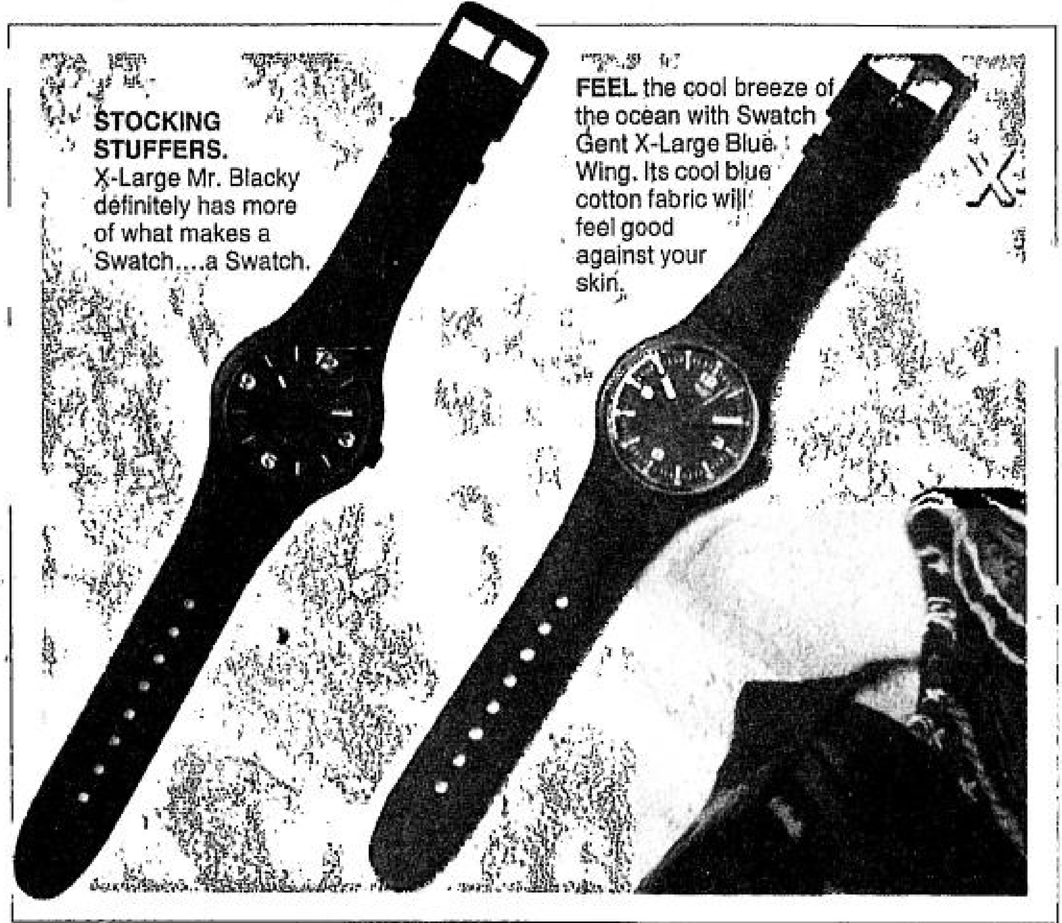

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Per DTI NCR Permit No. 4254, Series of 2001

There's Christmas outside the mall

By Margot C. Tan
2bU! Correspondent

Believe it or not, there are more productive ways to spend Christmas than shopping

LEARN sign language.

I have always enjoyed sitting around and doing nothing, especially at this time of the year. It was during one of these moments of drinking coffee and lounging around when I came across a group of mute schoolgirls talking to one another. I couldn't make out the words they were signaling with their gestures, but the messages they conveyed were louder than any conversation I had eavesdropped on. Their eyes and faces told me they were good friends, soul sisters, in fact. Don't you think it's about time the world learned how to speak their kind of eloquence?

- Get a good haircut, dress up, go to the studio and have your picture taken.

It may be a vain idea, but you have to admit it's a good one. Portraits don't come around very often. You don't graduate from school every two years unless you're a nerd or a freak. Ninety-nine percent of the human population are normal earthlings with real waistlines. Models who have their pictures and profiles taken every other day, though idolized, comprise only a negligible fraction of the world.

- Go church hopping and look for the one you'd want to get married in.

Put a new twist to an old tradition. Add to the Christmas prayer and worship that adolescent dream of wearing a pretty white dress with a long train down the red carpeted aisle. Isn't it true that churches bloom during the holidays? Be charmed by its aura and pick out the one you love most.

- Take out the best meal you can afford and give it to your favorite waiter.

Cashiers, salesladies and waiters get crabbier by the Christmas minute because of the stress they sustain by attending to perky shoppers. Why not take this opportunity to make that random act of kindness and see smiles on their faces? While waiting in line, I tried cozying up to the bagger with the latest show-biz *chika*. You'd think her face would light up with my Kris Aquino impressions: "Pilipinas, game *ka na ba*?" It was all in vain. But when I offered her some candy, it certainly made her day.

- Write a letter to your wrinkly 80-year-old self.

Give yourself something to look forward to and to laugh when your dentures float in a glass of water and your hair turns whiter than snow. Write down everything you've ever worried about and all the little stories you think you would rather forget. Put in a little memento for the old-fart version of you, and tuck it away for safekeeping inside your drawer.

- Throw out your cell phone for a whole week.

Disappear from the texting world, if not for a month, then for a week. You've managed to live without it practically most of your life anyway. Spend more time for yourself and for the birthday celebrator in peace and quiet, and learn to let go of the things you've considered valuable.

- Teach a street kid how to read.

It never was a good idea to give money, food or anything else to beggars and peddlers in the streets. Instead of helping them, you're reinforcing their dependence and indirectly telling them how worthless and unproductive they'll always be. Why not spend a few hours each day instead, keeping them company and giving them the gift of literacy? The knowledge you impart will extend far beyond what the P2 in your pocket can ever buy.

- Start a diary.

You may not have a Carlo to sit beside you today ("He's sooo cute! *Sabi niya*, I'm pretty, *kaya lang*, I'm fat..."—you get the gist), but there's certainly something worthwhile to talk about and forever put into record about the 24 hours you've spent today. Sometimes jotting down thoughts that cross your mind or simply doodling the pages away would prove to be great therapy for the stressed out and depressed you. The holidays provide great inspiration, though *palamigan pa tayo ng pasko...*

- Visit the prisoners.

There's such a thing as forgiveness, you know. And sometimes, you just have to forgive, not really somebody else, but yourself. There's also such a thing as peace and consolation. Be generous enough to share yourself to those who need you, whether they have a place in your little life or not.

- Put everyone who has ever meant anything to you together in one room.

When my perfect, loyal *barkada* arranged a surprise birthday party for me last year, what moved me most was the fact that every single person whom I loved and cared for were all crammed in the four walls of the room.

They might have been complete strangers to one another—simple acquaintances, good friends and even enemies who had nothing but wrath for the other—but they all stayed and shared an evening to celebrate something special with me. These are the kind of memories all of us could absolutely have more of.

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JED ESTRAD

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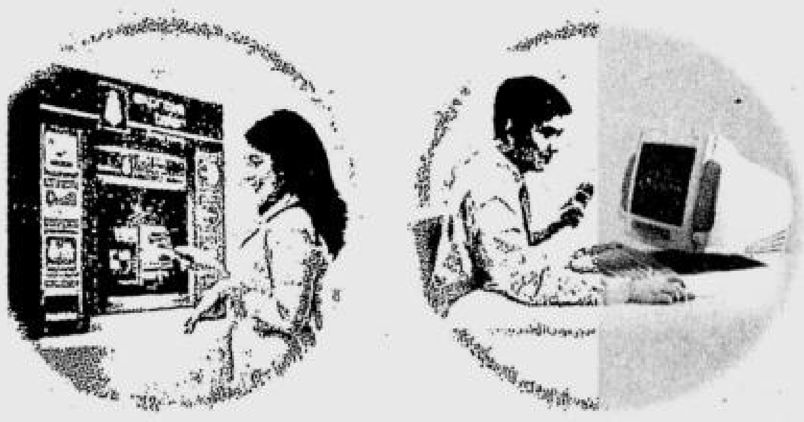

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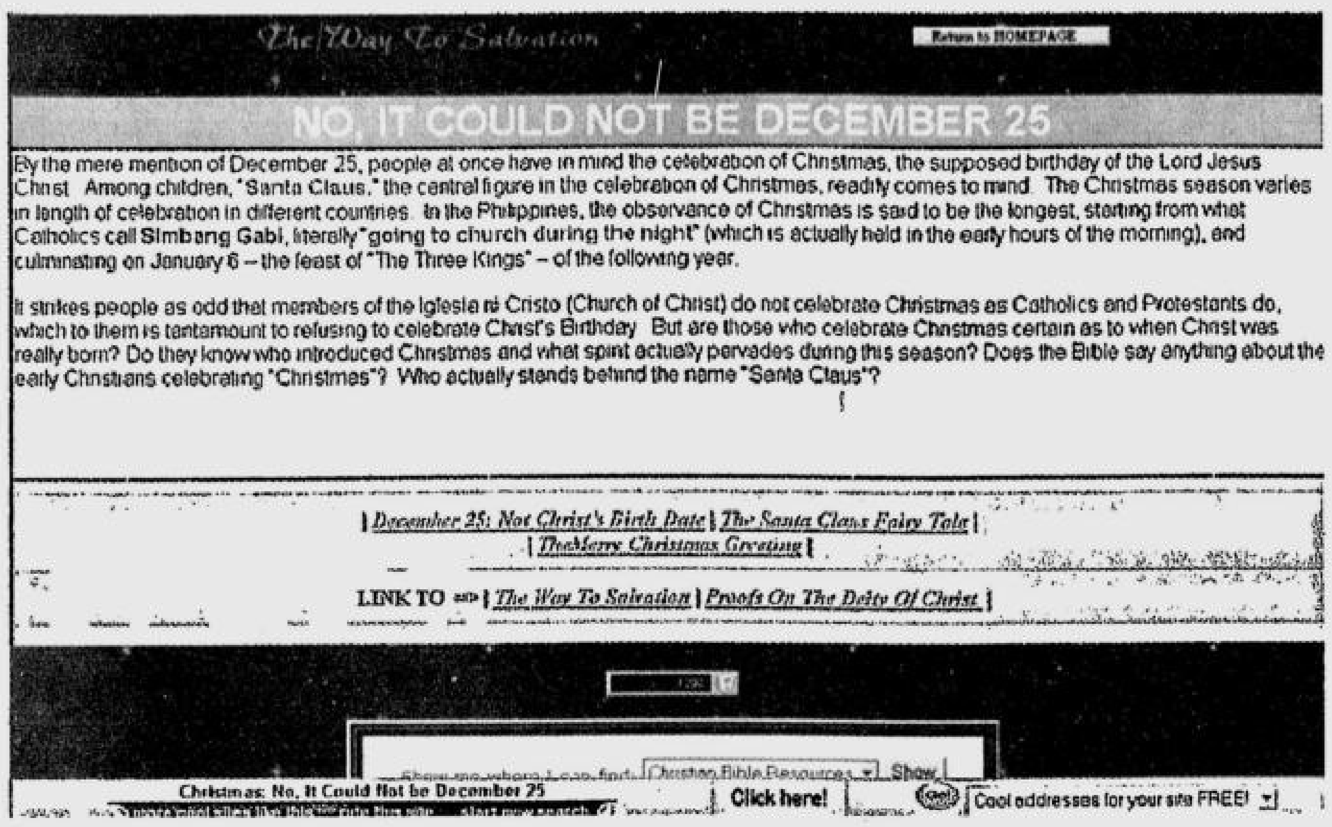

NO, IT COULD NOT BE DECEMBER 25

By the mere mention of December 25, people at once have in mind the celebration of Christmas, the supposed birthday of the Lord Jesus Christ. Among children, "Santa Claus," the central figure in the celebration of Christmas, readily comes to mind. The Christmas season varies in length of celebration in different countries. In the Philippines, the observance of Christmas is said to be the longest, starting from what Catholics call Simbang Gabi, literally "going to church during the night" (which is actually held in the early hours of the morning), and culminating on January 6 – the feast of "The Three Kings" – of the following year.

It strikes people as odd that members of the Iglesia ni Cristo (Church of Christ) do not celebrate Christmas as Catholics and Protestants do, which to them is tantamount to refusing to celebrate Christ's Birthday. But are those who celebrate Christmas certain as to when Christ was really born? Do they know who introduced Christmas and what spirit actually pervades during this season? Does the Bible say anything about the early Christians celebrating "Christmas"? Who actually stands behind the name "Santa Claus"?

| December 25: Not Christ's Birth Date | The Santa Claus Fairy Tale |
| The Merry Christmas Greeting |
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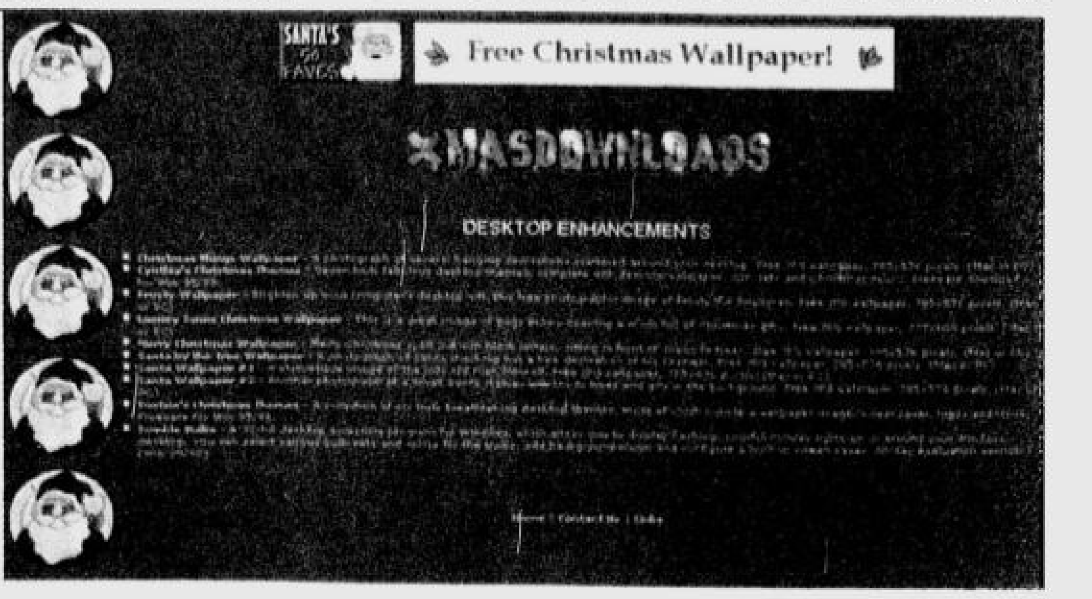

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So what's happening on the Net this Christmas?

BY GABRIEL MERCADO

IF website owners would have their way, there would only be one thing they'd like people to be doing online—shop, shop and shop!

And so, naturally, I expected to be overwhelmed with shopping sites when I started checking out the search engines. Fortunately, that wasn't always the case. Searching for "Christmas" on Google as well as Yehey.com, the country's premiere search engine, results in a hodgepodge of Christmas tips, religious sites and some attempts at "fun." Here they are:

Much ado about date
http://christmas.learn.to

Okay, this one is for the skeptics. Have you ever wondered why Christmas is on Dec. 25, and not, say, Nov. 14? I mean, why not? It's just a valid a day as any, right? For the Bible-quoting, fire-and-brimstone type, this is the site to re-arm one's Christmas-bashing guns. If you need help in de-glorifying Santa Claus or determining how commercialism defiles the true meaning of the greeting "Merry Christmas," or arguing against Dec. 25 as the official Christmas day, then visit this site. With claims like "Saint Nicholas, otherwise known as 'Santa Claus,' was among the many 'saints' delisted by the Roman Catholic Church because of their dubious (existence)," this site would be interesting reading at the very least.

Deckings
http://www.xmasdownloads.com/themes.html

You've decked the halls, your house and your office; even your phone has a Christmas ringtone. But wait, your PC is just not merry enough! Well, worry no more! Here's the site that can turn that boring interface to the holiday cheer machine that Bill Gates must have intended it to be! You can find screen savers, Christmas Looney Tunes wallpapers and MIDI tones by the dozen, and some of these are pretty funny. So your class or officemate thinks he's so smart with that new computer? Well, find solace in the fact that he didn't read this article, and hence doesn't know where to download those nice twinkle bulbs that can make your PC rival your Christmas tree!

Christmas lyric sheets
http://41051.com/xmaslyrics/

Yes, you've been hearing the song for most of your life, but can you really remember what your true love sent to you on, say, the seventh day of Christmas? Seven geese a-laying? Or swans a-swimming? No no, maids a-milking! Or ladies dancing? Or prancing? Silly, prancing is one of the reindeer! Or was that Prancer? While we're at it, what were the names of the other reindeers? For the answer to this, and other life-threatening and essential Christmas lyrics, come to this site so that your next caroling, either regale (or revolt) your friends with your amazing ability to remember "O Christmas Tree."

Olops the other reindeer
http://surf.to/olops

Local band Parokya ni Edgar knows something we don't. And it's a downright deep, dirty secret about Olops, the infamous reindeer that tried to bring Santa's fave Rudolph down. They felt so strongly about it that they wrote a hit song recently. When word spread about this reindeer's evil deeds, a website was set up. Surf in to find out all about Olops, the evil, malevolent reindeer and his shameless attempt to bring catastrophe at a now-famous Christmas past. Let this website be a reminder to us to never allow bad reindeer to try and ruin our Christmas again.

Personal site
http://members.brabant.chello.nl/~m.vanzwam/kerst/kerstmis1-en.htm

The owner of this site's seeming obsession with Christmas and all things Christmas-like is obvious as she has gone and made herself an interesting hodgepodge of pictures, recipes, Christmas Webcams, how to say "Merry Christmas" in different languages, Java Applets, Ericsson ringtones, various pictures and other stuff. Sure, it's difficult to navigate, and there are some simple page errors, but it's a nice departure from all the slickness of the other sites.

Christmas tales
http://www.teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-4098.html
http://www.christmas-stories.com/christmas-classics.php

"The Little Match Girl" by Hans Christian Anderson is a semi-tragic yet beautiful tale of a poor girl selling matches in the shivering cold of a Christmas night. At the end of this story she is left with three matches and as she lights them one by one she has visions of riches which warm her soul—a romantic yet touching story of a poor, cold, starving girl on her way to a place where there is no hunger or cold. I was so moved by this story when I was a little kid. If you haven't read it yet, make sure to read it before the story gets diluted and "Disneyed" into a cash cow by some entreprenuring filmmaker. Don't say I didn't warn you.

Ringtones you say?
http://www.2thumbswap.com/members/tones/nokia/tones_nokia_genre_christmas.html

For some people, letting people know about who they are via the ringtones that they use is essential. If you're such a person, how can your phone NOT be a part of this Christmas season? Check out this site and end all doubts as to just how merry you can be! You will, however, need a composer-equipped phone. There are other sites that have ringtones, but this one also has "Pasko Na Sinta Ko" as well as "Malamig Ang Simoy Ng Hangin" as well as the standards.

Christmas graphics
http://www.christmas-graphics.com/

Need to make your own greeting card? Or poster? Maybe even a website? This is the site to check out for pictures of candles, candy, reindeer, snowmen, trees, holly, mistletoe and all sorts of assorted Christmas imagery. With sites like these, amateur and even pro designers will never have to worry as far as looking merry is concerned.

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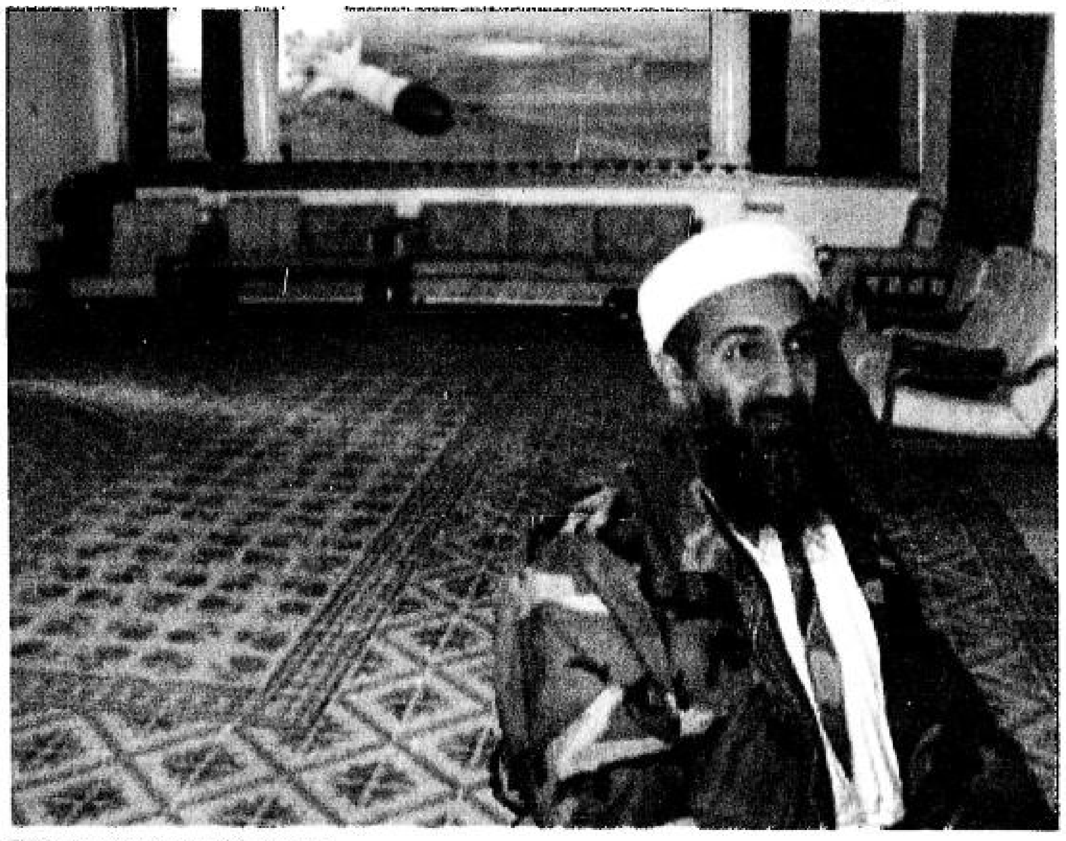
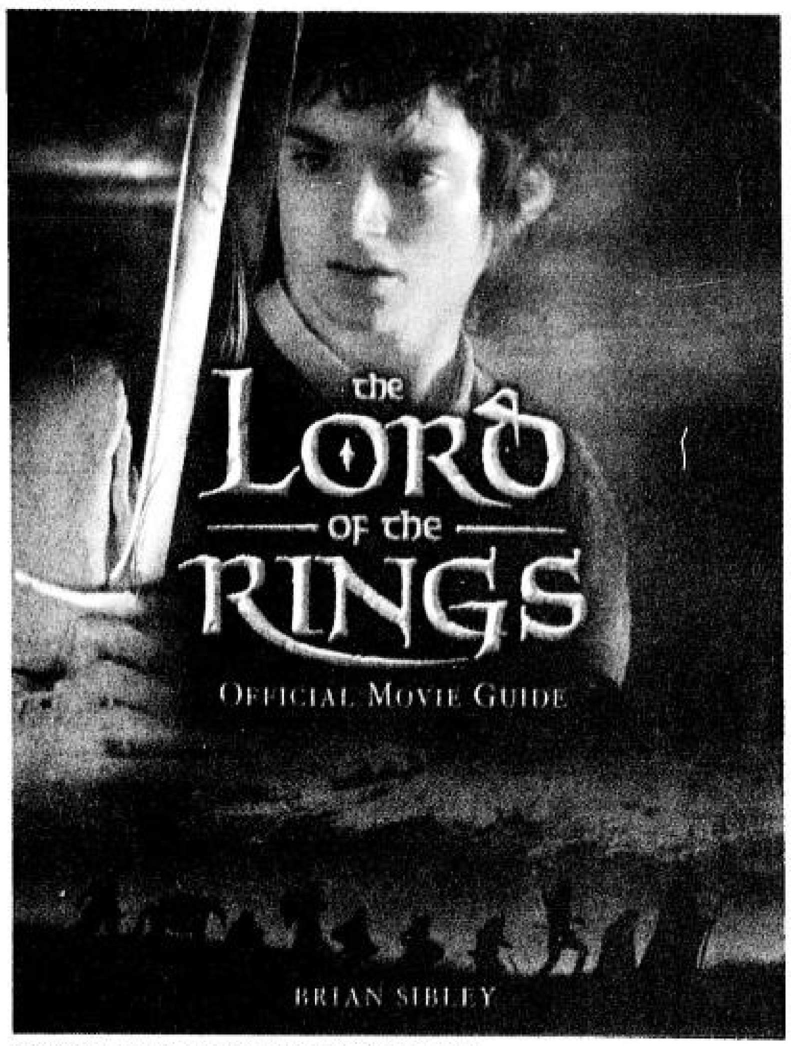
2bu! Wish List

BY THE 2BU! CORRESPONDENTS

LAST year, we came up with a list for Ol' Saint Nick to check off one by one for the next year to come. It's that time of the year again when we put on our thinking caps and come up with yet another list to top off last year's...


THE BANE to world peace.



HIGH hopes for "The Lord of the Rings"

Show biz

- For teen actresses to realize that taking off their clothes is not the answer to the world's problems—or even their own.
- For show biz newbies to learn that they have to achieve something first before they can start acting like primadonnas. Then again, a gazillion box-office hits are not enough to justify bratty behavior.
- For celebrities to be honest—that's the only way you'll get people to stop snooping around.
- For celebrities to realize that the moment you step into show business, you almost automatically waive your right to a private life. If being in the public eye bothers you so much, you might as well quit.
- For the supposed jinx to stop.

Fashion

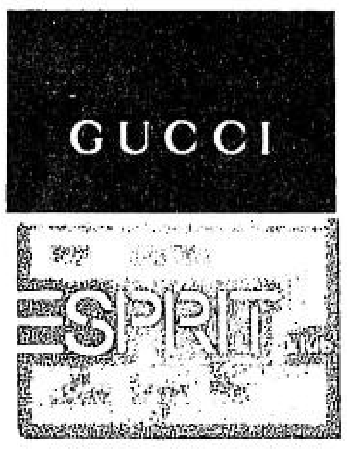
- For shoppers to realize that branded does not necessarily mean better. Brand-consciousness isn't something to be proud of.
- We want our own *ukay-ukay* in Manila.
- For sales clerks to shape up. Following us around like we're criminals is not gonna do much for your sales. Likewise, if you're too lazy to really do what you're supposed to do—help us with our purchases, in case you didn't know—better stay home and knit.

Television

- We wish game shows would stop ripping off foreign ones. Less foreign-show rip-offs, in general. Who wants to watch a local "Sex and the City" when you can watch the real thing?
- For talk shows to stop capitalizing on other people's miseries.
- For the Billy commercials to come to an end. It used to be cute, but we've had enough.
- Better sets for "The Price is Right," "Wheel of Fortune" and "Family Feud." Fine; these game shows were adapted from the '70s, but we are no longer living in that era.

Music

- We wish people would appreciate Filipino music more and support our artists by going to performances.
- That more establishments would be more open to other talented bands and not hire only show bands.
- That music piracy would lessen next year.
- That record companies would wake up and realize their albums are overpriced. Kudos to Viva and Sony Music for lowering their prices.
- That the Filipino market would be more open to more genres of music.
- For more artists to come out—and for them to realize that good looks are not everything.
- For artists to stop doing revivals. You've got the talent, come up with new material.
- We do not want more Britney and Christina clones to appear.
- For local bands to have better music videos and for young directors to be given the chance to shine.



A BRAND cannot buy you confidence.

Movies

- For Philippine cinema, a band-aid to heal all those wounds.
- That "The Lord of the Rings" would not be a disappointment.
- For more movies like the entries to the Manila Film Festival to come out. There may be hope yet for the local industry.
- For the endless production of bold movies to stop. Puh-leeze!

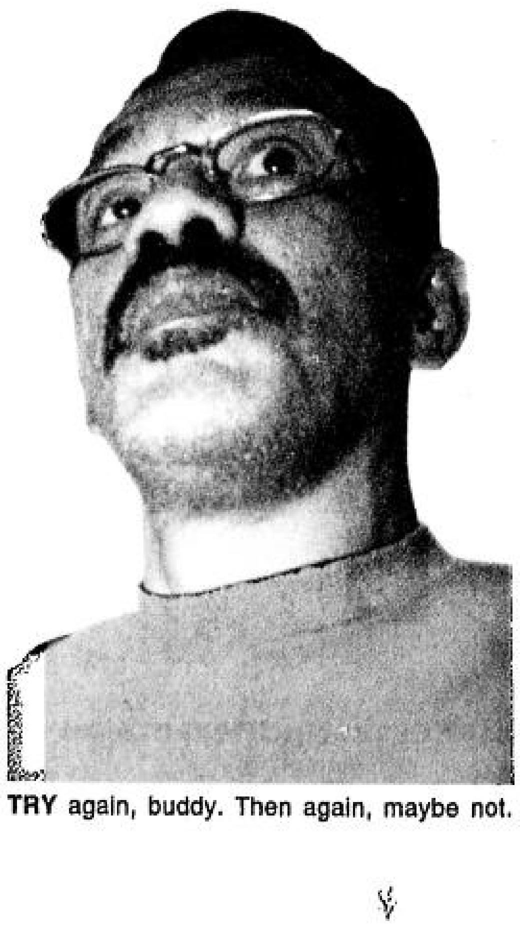
BARGAIN era

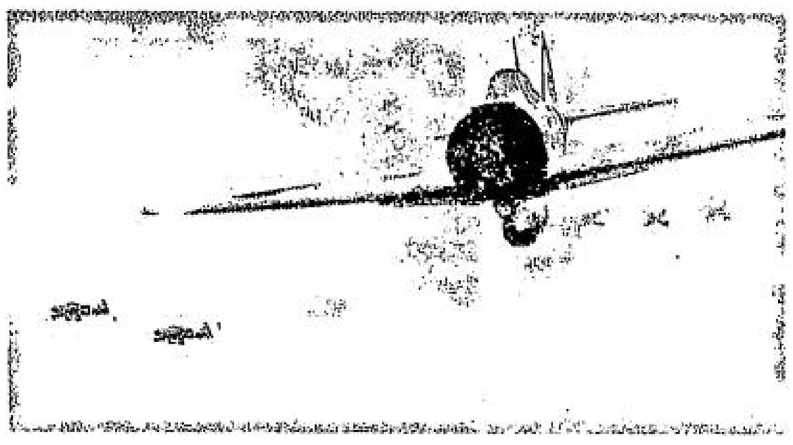
NO MORE BOLDIES. Please.

- For the new theaters to be preserved and for old ones to be renovated. We looove the plush seats, the nonsticky floors, the surround sound and the good, good food in the new cinemas.
- For moviegoers to actually use their heads in picking films to watch—no one would produce sleazy movies if no one would watch them.
- For people to stop buying pirated VCDs. Nothing beats the big screen experience.
- For the new breed of scriptwriters and directors to be given the chance to showcase their works.
- For the people to support the local movie industry—and for the local movie industry to give people a reason to support it. If India can do it, why can't we?

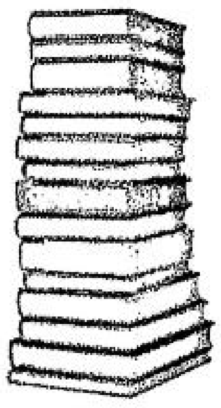
Reading fare

- For our peers to realize that countless books are waiting to be read and there is life beyond TV.
- For J.K. Rowling to come out with Book 5. We are waiting with bated breath.
- For the emerging breed of young writers to never lose their passion for the written word.
- For teen magazines to find their own niches—and not become clones of each other.
- For readership to go up—and not just because of eye candy but content.


TRY again, buddy. Then again, maybe not.


A SCENE from Yamashita's treasure. There's hope for Philippine movies yet.

Harry Potter
AND THE
GOBLET OF FIRE
WE'VE read this 10 times. We want the next one.


THEY'RE just waiting.

Food

- For portions to stop getting smaller. We're not blind, you know.
- For McDonald's to revive their delivery service.
- For Chinese food restaurants to stop using MSG.
- For restaurants to stop using Styrofoam and other nonbiodegradable products.
- For delivery services to be prompt, efficient and to have ready change.

Technology

- We wish that telecommunication companies would cut 75 percent off their service charges. No one should pay so much to communicate.
- For Filipino programmers and designers to continue honing their craft. May they never be disheartened in their desire to conquer the World Wide Web.
- For local dotcoms to flourish.

GENERATION text's pledge of allegiance. Freedom with responsibility.

Education

- For tuition to be proportional to the kind of education students are getting.
- For the education department to introduce competition among public schools to improve the quality of basic education.
- For teachers to start talking about the lesson and stop talking about themselves.

'Buhay' Pinoy

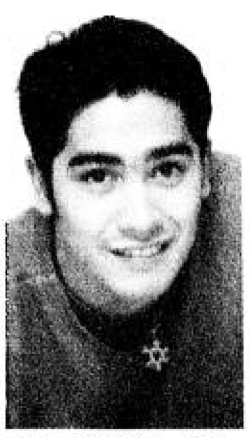
- That people would stop using money as a measure of a person's success or happiness.
- That there be an automatic self-ejecting seat for texters and phone callers while they are inside theater and cinemas.
- For the mall guards to have an X-ray bomb detector to minimize long queues at the mall entrance and for the guards to effectively *know* what exactly are the kind of "bombs" they are looking for.
- For the value of the peso to go up.
- For more work opportunities.
- For acting lessons for Philip Medel Jr.
- For cell phone snatchers—especially those who resort to violence—to drop dead. Now.
- For the souls of dishonest cab drivers to burn in hell.
- For all establishments to maintain clean toilets—and that means flush that works and provision for toilet paper.

Politics and government

- That the politicians would think about the Filipino people for at least *one minute.*
- We want a ceasefire on word wars between politicians and politicking.
- For the government to give us enough reasons to stay and not look for greener pastures elsewhere.

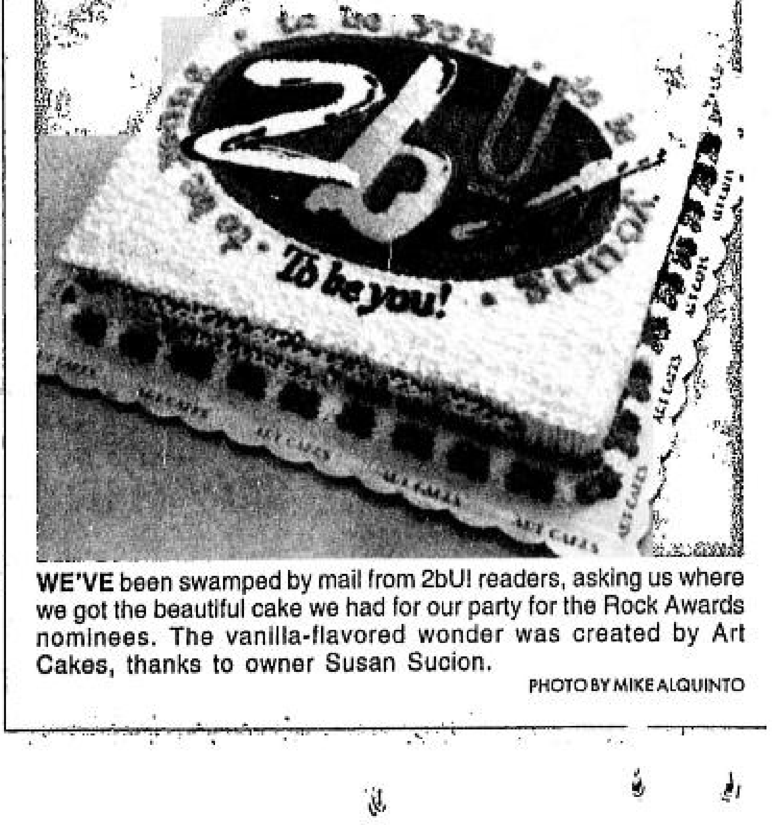
Current issues

- For a genuine and lasting ceasefire in Mindanao and everywhere there is war.
- For our solons to pass the law protecting women from all kinds of abuse.
- For the best solution to the garbage problem .


HELLO, Billy. Bye-bye.

The world

- For terminally-ill people to find strength and beauty in life.
- World peace.



WE'VE been swamped by mail from 2bU! readers, asking us where we got the beautiful cake we had for our party for the Rock Awards nominees. The vanilla-flavored wonder was created by Art Cakes, thanks to owner Susan Sucion.

PHOTO BY MIKE ALQUINTO

John Grisham's Christmas

Skipping Christmas
By John Grisham

BY CATHERINE YOUNG
2bU! Correspondent

REVIEW

THE PLASTIC Santa wall hanging in our house keeps falling. No matter how much tape we use, we still find the same blob of a man sprawled on the floor in the morning with the same goofy smile on his face. Metaphorically, I wonder if this is what Christmas would be like this year. With all the problems the world is facing, one would think, why push Christmas? Should we force the same happy tradition in the midst of tough times? And why bother with all the expensive and capitalistic rituals that people would normally go through to celebrate the birth of Christ? The holiday season, after all, has turned into a giant business venture.

This is the premise that sets the stage for John Grisham's recent novel, "Skipping Christmas" (released just this November). Luther and Nora Kronk are a couple who just saw their only child Blair hop on a plane to Peru to join the Peace Corps. Without the presence of their beloved offspring, Luther, a tax accountant, decides not to "do Christmas" for the year.

After calculating the expenses of last year's holidays, here is the list of annoying things he wishes not to deal with: tipping, meaningless gifts, clutter and wrapping, traffic and crowds, fruitcakes, liquor, hams, expensive trees, office parties and wasted money.

He manages to pressure his high-strung wife to agree, and together they book a 10-day Caribbean cruise that leaves exactly on Christmas Day.

In the beginning of the season, while their neighbors in the town of Hemlock get through the yearly grind of putting up identical Frostys on their roofs, they tan themselves in artificial BoilMats to prepare for the Jamaican beaches. They cancel parties, shelve Christmas cards and ignore tradition. They turn away the policemen selling calendars, the Boy Scouts peddling Christmas trees and the firemen with their usual fruitcakes. Television crews, newspaper reporters and neighborhood gossip are ignored as they become determined in escaping the holidays. They almost succeed, until their daughter phones them on Christmas Eve and tells them she'll be home for Christmas with her new Peruvian fiancé.

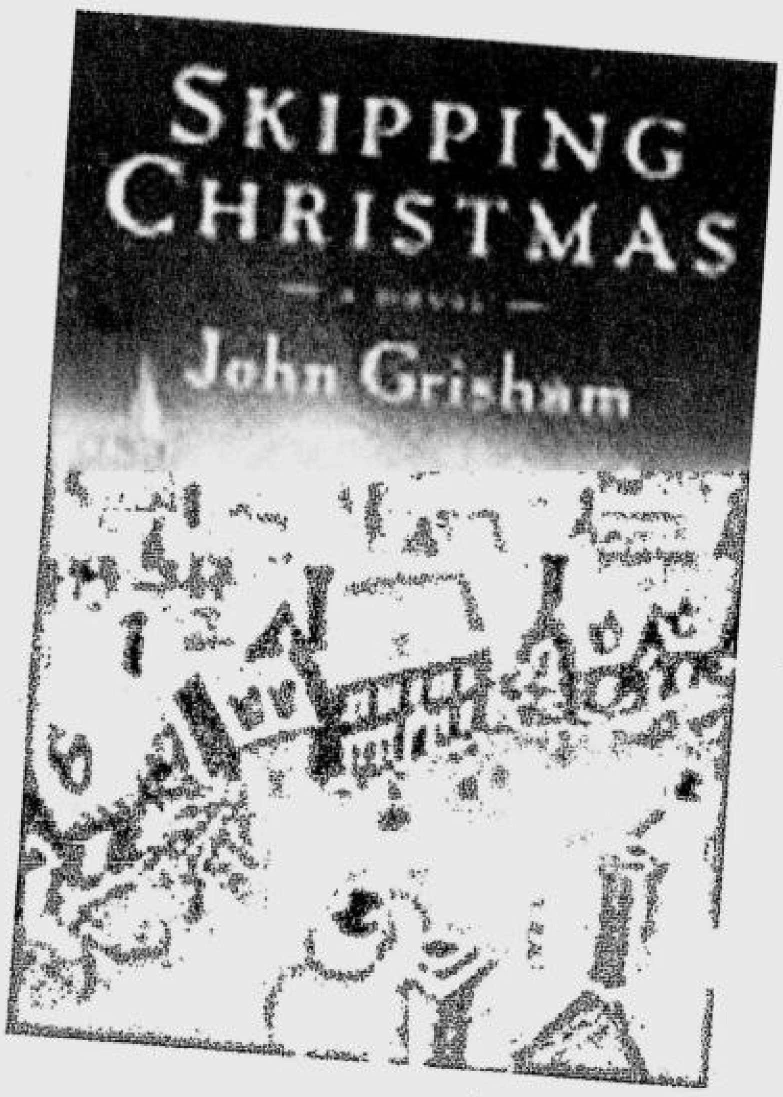
Hilarious

What follow are the couple's hilarious escapades as they cram Christmas in a matter of hours. The hectic shopping, decorations and expenses they tried to get away from came back to haunt them with a vengeance. At the end of the day, Christmas still proves meaningful as their neighbors get into the community spirit by helping them out of a fix.

Dubbed as a modern-day Christmas Carol, "Skipping Christmas" is a great quick read for those not feeling the holiday spirit this year. From the Grisham perspective, the typical Scrooge of the 21st century will not be the old miserly "bah, humbug!" types, but rather those who are tired of the expensive rituals; who, in the midst of spending money, forget what Christmas was originally for.

It's not your usual highly charged courtroom Grisham novel, but it does make you look at this season in a different perspective. Hollywood may not turn this into a movie anytime soon, but it does make one appreciate the holidays. Readers can expect a simple novel they would want to reread every time they feel the Christmas blues.

For everyone who may not be greeting the world with a *feliz navidad*, now is the time to remember why we celebrate this time of the year with a bang—to share ourselves with the people we love and make time for ourselves. In this time of crisis, we need to push for the holidays with a little more effort than the usual. Heck, I guess a little more tape on that plastic Santa would serve me well.



What would it be like to skip the hassles of Christmas? His Legal Thriller Highness shows how in a hilarious reworking of 'A Christmas Carol'

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Winning Image Models get P100,000 cash each.

1. Open to male/female aspirants, 16 to 35, single or married. Previous winners are not qualified to join the search.
2. Attach 1 close-up (3R, most recent) color photo to any of these proofs of purchase:
   - One (1) empty Heno de Pravia (HDP) Soap Pack (135 g. or 180 g.)
   - Two (2) empty 90 g. HDP Soap Packs
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   - One (1) back label of HDP Deo Roll-on Active Plus
   - One (1) back label of Heno de Pravia Agua de Colonia

   On the empty pack, print your name, address, phone numbers and signature.
3. If you're sending a back label, stick it at the back of the photo. Write your name, address, phone numbers, and signature on a separate piece of paper.
   Mail entries to:

HENO DE PRAVIA
Search for Image Models 3
P.O. Box 19-100 San Juan, MM

Lucky Searchers can win P30,000 worth of prizes.

1. Attach 1 close-up (3R, most recent) photo of your Image Model to any of the above-mentioned proofs of purchase.
2. At the back of the photo, print the name of your Image Model candidate. On the empty pack, print your name, address, phone nos. and signature. Mail entries to the address above.

Lucky Senders can win up to P60,000.

1. Lucky Senders are entries without photos attached, and are eligible only for the 3 bimonthly draws of P20,000 each. Write your name, address, phone nos., and signature on any of the above-mentioned HDP proofs of purchase. Mail entries to the same address.
2. Non-winning Image Model and Lucky Searcher entries are also qualified for the draws. So send as many entries as you can!

* *Entries must be received at least 5 days before the screening/draw dates (1st) Jan. 16, 2002; (2nd) Mar. 18, 2002; (3rd) May 16, 2002*

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aspirants
For a chance to win cash plus print/TV exposure

PROMO DETAILS:
The nationwide promo runs from Nov. 17, 2001 to May 17, 2002

Pre-screening for qualifiers:
All entries received will be screened by client, agency, and DTI rep. every 2 mos. The bimonthly Lucky Sender winner will be drawn from the Lucky Sender and non-winning Image Model/ Lucky Searcher entries.

Criteria for pre-screening:
Photogenic quality and image projection - 50%
Beauty (*For males: Appeal*) - 50%
Must possess a beautiful (or handsome) face with clear complexion.

Selection of Finalists:
Only 10 final candidates (5 males, 5 females) who meet the cut-off score of 85% will be chosen for the final judging.

Final Image Model candidates and their Lucky Searchers (if any) will be notified by registered mail. They must confirm their participation on or before May 24, 2002.

The Lucky Searchers will have to show their registered mail and present a valid ID on the screening date.

Final Screening:
The 10 official candidates will undergo VTR and photo sessions on May 31, 2002 at Horizon Edsa Hotel. Judges will determine the official HDP Image Models.

Criteria for final screening:
Personality - 50%
Beauty (Appeal for Males) - 40%
Talent - 10%

Announcement of Winners:
Awarding of Image Model/ Lucky Searcher winners will be on June 1, 2002 in one of Manila's prestigious malls.

Prizes:
Image Models: each receives P100,000 in cash *plus P10,000 worth of local & imported Gal products.*

Lucky Searchers (if any): each receives P20,000 in cash *plus P10,000 worth of local & imported Gal products.*

Lucky Senders: each receives P20,000 in cash.

For inquiries, call TACTICA Ads @ 671-9795 to 97

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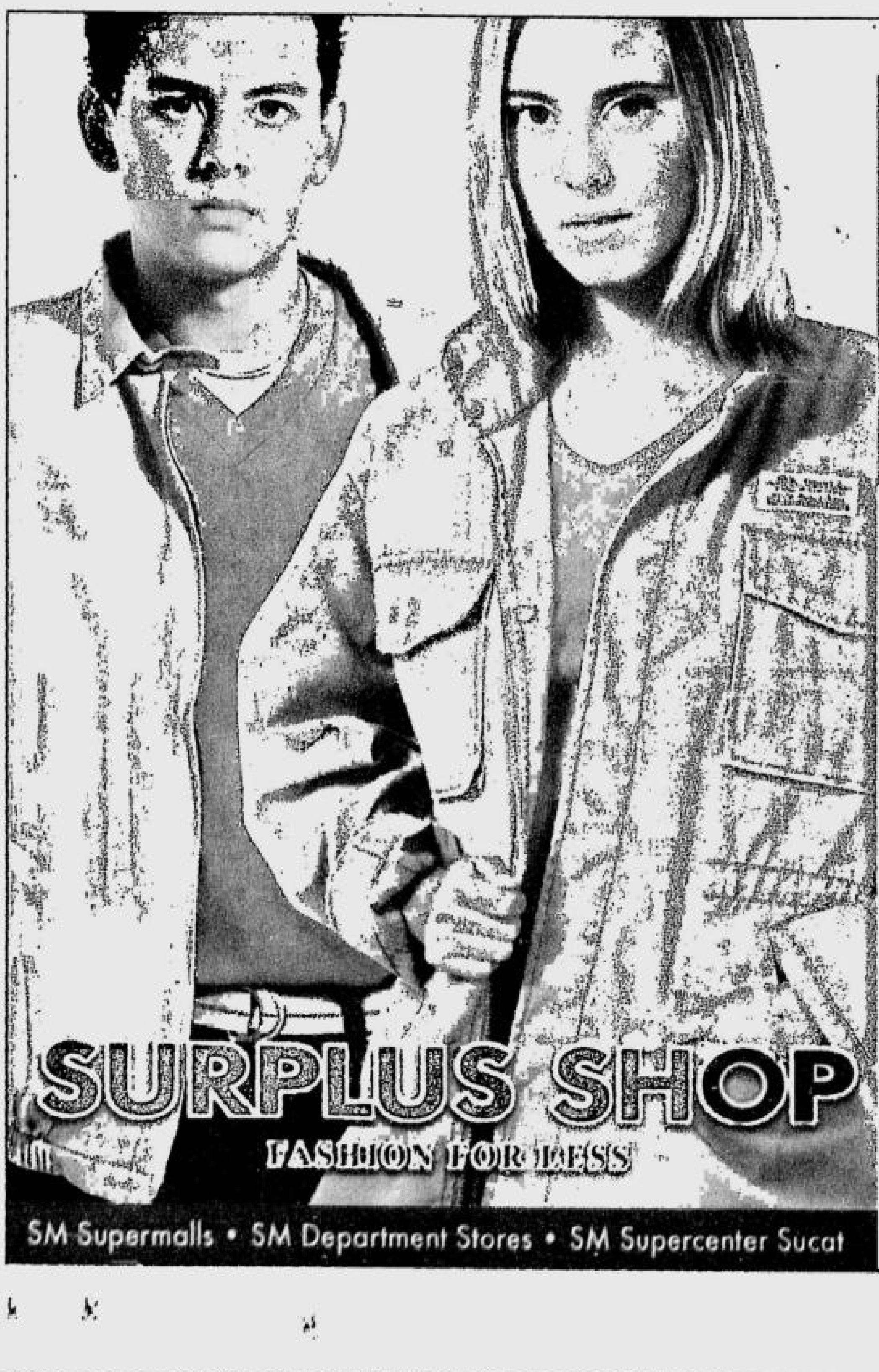

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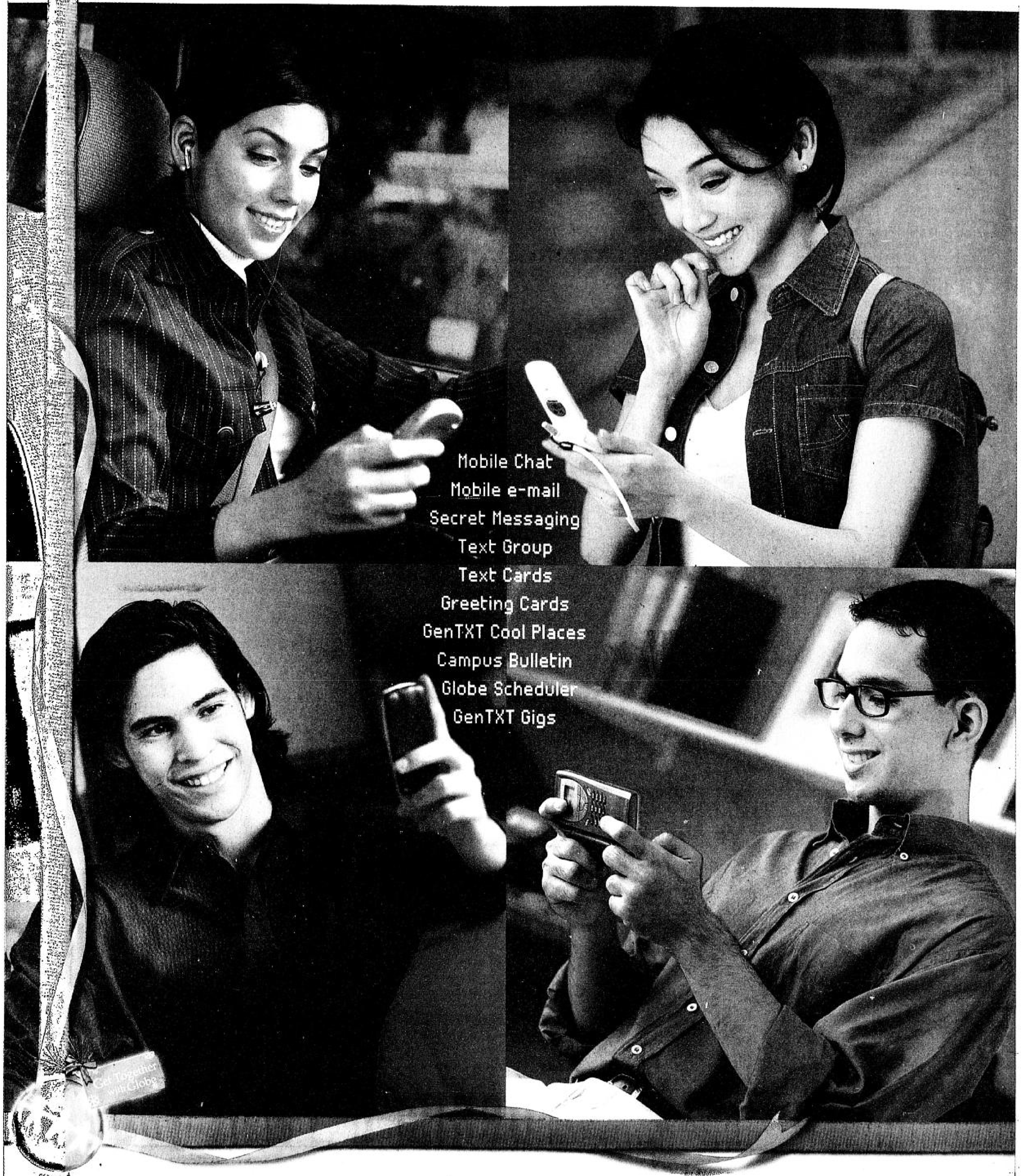
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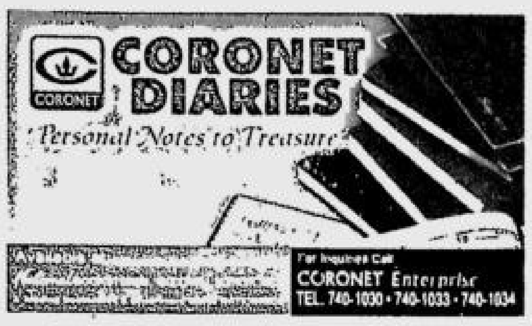
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DUNKIN' DONUTS
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Young Norwegians play at being pop stars 2

2bU
to be you • to be young • To be you! • to be young

By Maui V. Reyes

FLASHBACK to 1994. Two friends, who met at the age of 5 in a small town of Oslo, Norway, release a children's record and get nominated for the Norwegian Grammy awards. Before that, they had already acted in musicals like "Annie," "The Sound of Music," "Bugsy Malone" and "The Wizard of Oz."

In 1998, their guitar and piano playing and songwriting (in English, for the sake of the rest of the planet), got them a contract with Atlantic Records. Another children's album, "Shades of Purple," whose single, "Don't Say You Love Me," got a boost from a tie-up with the Pokémon movie. The album went gold in almost every country the pair visited to promote it. Welcome to the world of Marit Larsen and Marion Raven.

Widely known as the pop band M2M and not quite of legal age yet, these young women have already accomplished more than your average pop group. Okay, so they may not be Britney Spears—but does she play any instruments on her album?

The Norwegian pop stars wrote and cowrote every song on their last album ("The first song I ever wrote was 'Girl in Your Dreams,' " Marit says. "I was 13 and the song is about this boy I met. The song shows that young people also can fall in love. I was sitting in my room studying for a history test and was so bored I started writing the song instead"): They are ready to show the world what teen women can do with their "The Big Room."

In Manila recently for a promo tour, the Norwegian musicians talked to 2bU! about shopping, Christmas and those Hanson kids.

Let's talk about the promo tour. How has it been so far?

Marion: We've been on the road since Nov. 13. We've been in Indonesia, Thailand, Hong Kong, Korea, just promoting our new album, having showcases and interviews, meeting our fans.

What's it like seeing all these places ordinary teens don't get to see?

Marit: It's cool, you know. It's really great to be 18 and say, I've been to 22 countries. Unfortunately, it's not like we get to see all the places. But we get a really good idea where we'll go back to for a vacation.

Is Asia on your list of holiday places?

Marit: (Smiles) Definitely!

Marion: Phuket, Thailand. It's really nice. And I'd like to go to the beaches here in the Philippines.

Obviously you guys get to do a lot of shopping...

Marion: I always look for good jeans. I loooooove jeans.

Marit: I like cool T-shirts.

> Despite penning and singing international pop hits, M2M are just two kids with normal highs, like jeans, Christmas and Hanson

Shoes?

Marion: Actually, not too many shoes because they take up too much space in the suitcase. But I bought a new pair of shoes in Hong Kong.

Marit: Yeah, me too.

How much has your music matured since the last album?

Marit: It's matured as much as we have, I guess. We recorded and wrote the last record in 1998, so it was a while ago. It's a natural thing that's happened, us getting better, evolving in our songwriting, in our instrument-playing. And vocally, you know, it's *us* now.

Do you write about things you've never really experienced?

Marion: Well, most of the time we write about things we've experienced because it's really hard to write songs about things you don't know. But sometimes maybe a friend experienced it and she tells you about it, and you write a song.

Do you ever feel like you're exposing yourself too much? I mean, not every teen's thoughts are revealed to the world...

Marion: You know, we leave out details and names! (Laughs)

Marit: I know! (Laughs) There are a bunch of songs you don't necessarily put on the record, so...

Marion: But you know, sometimes songs are really personal. It's a way of sharing it with people, like the fans. It's perfect; it's okay for me. But for people to write in a magazine that they hate the song, and it's something so personal to you? I get really sad. I guess that's the bad part about sharing your songs.

Do you plan to venture into different genres of music?

Marit: We're hoping we're still gonna keep getting better, and keep evolving and exploring other things. It just comes down to what music inspires us at the time. So we'll never know what's going to happen next.

What kind of music do you listen to now?

Marion: Pop and alternative rock? Like singer-songwriters, like British pop, like Travis.

Marit: Coldplay's nice.

If you could collaborate with any artist, who would it be?

Marion: Travis. I'd like to write a song with him. Playing live with him would be a dream come true.

I don't think you'd want to write with Thom Yorke though...

Marit: (Shocked) Why not? (Laughs) I think... I don't know. It would be really interesting. I mean, he's amazing.

What kind of song would you come up with?

Marit: That's the thing, you have no idea what could come out of that kind of writing session.

Do you have any weird Christmas traditions?

Marion: In Norway we celebrate Christmas on the 24th. So we wake up on

YOUNG/ p.D3

Christmas Shopping Hours
Dec.24 & Dec.31
9 am to 7 pm

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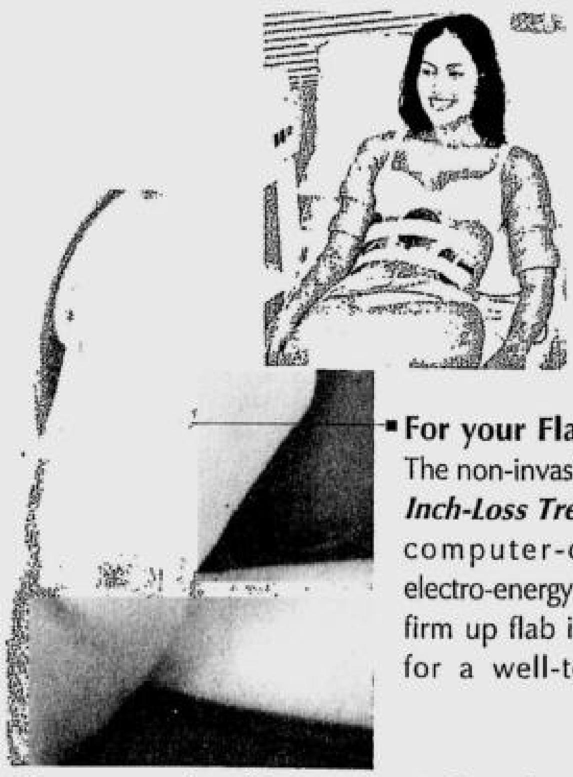

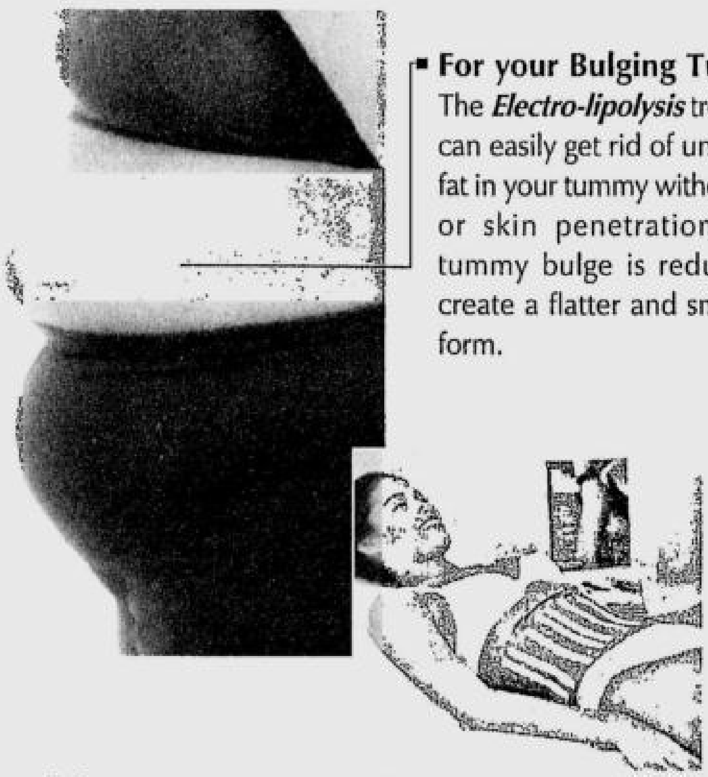

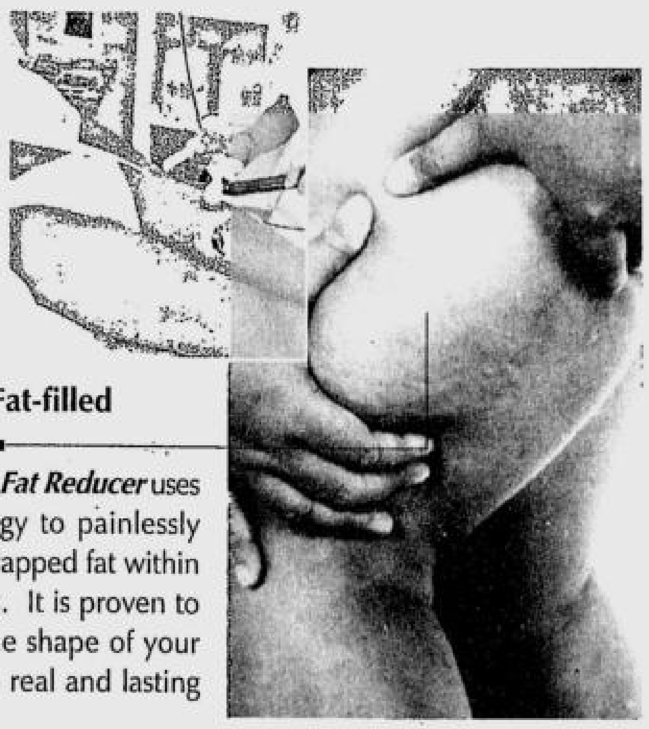

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Pinoy hip-hop's annoyed young man

D-coy chafes at misconceptions about his music and the commercialization of hip-hop. But with its livid language and livid subjects, is Pinoy rap any different from its black parent?

WITH THE BOYS of Fubu

D-COY a.k.a. W.A.K.I.N.
Plastic Age

2bU!
"THIS is what I know This is what I can do."

By Pam Pastor
Photos by Betoy Johnson

THE WHOLE thing began as a dare. One slow night at the 2bU! office, Maui, Jason and I decided to listen to a stack of albums still pending for review. We were silenced by the sound of two people moaning and then a guy whispering, "*Sandali lang, kukuha lang ako ng* condom."

We froze for a few seconds—then we all scrambled for the CD cover. "What song is that? Who is that guy?" We asked each other. The "song" was actually an interlude before a ditty called "Safe Sex" and the guy was a rapper who calls himself D-coy.

D-coy who? I was about to find out. Maui, in jest, said, "*Sige nga*, interview him," probably thinking I'd wave off the idea. I would trade my last pack of Tim Tams for a chance to see a replay of Maui's expression when I said nonchalantly, "Sure."

Face to face

Barely two weeks later, I find myself face-to-face with him. I am surprised to find that the guy who appeared almost sinister on his album cover actually seems harmless in person. He is short, possibly even shorter than me.

He makes Fubu (the brand he endorses) in Rockwell his playground. He hams it up for the camera, gamely posing as *Mang* Betoy snaps away. Later, we go over to Windows for the interview. Over *sisig*, D-coy leads me into the world of hip-hop—his passion, his life.

Nikusheen On in real life. 24-year-old D-coy has been in the industry for eight years. He tried different aliases, including Bounce, but none of them really caught on. People just wouldn't stop calling him Cocoy. "I changed it to D-coy to have a more hip-hop touch."

Before embracing the hip-hop culture, D-coy was a simple kid from Sucat. "*Hindi ako masyado lumalabas ng bahay*. I came from a conservative neighborhood." But getting into music changed that.

"I started as a dancer. Then I began writing songs. I met Andrew E. in 1995 and started working with him. That has changed my lifestyle. I was simple before. Now I'm more busy and I have less time to spend with the family."

For D-coy, and for the others who share his passion, hip-hop is more than just music. It's a way of life.

Evidently, he feels strongly about the subject. "It's not a fad. It doesn't mean that because you're wearing baggy pants, hip-hop *ka na*. It's a culture. People say Filipinos have no right to get into hip-hop because they're not black. But we are adapting the music and the culture, *hindi 'yung pagiging* black *nila*."

He disdains misconceptions about his music. "When people think about hip-hop, *naiisip* violence or gangs, which I believe is wrong. When I rap, I give situations, then I give solutions to these situations. I might not be as popular as other people, but I want people to remember my songs—that in some way they helped, that in some way they were able to make a difference."

He also talks about the dilemma of the struggling rappers. "It's difficult. How to reach out to the public and have people appreciate you and your music without sacrificing your artistry. *Ang hirap*. Number one, because of piracy. And No. 2, because it's hip-hop. *Hindi lahat ng* recording companies *naniniwala sa* hip-hop. Radio stations don't want to play hip-hop."

Frustrated

He gets even more frustrated with the emergence of commercial hip-hop artists. "We've been doing this for how many years now, trying to show people what hip-hop is all about, *tapos biglang may lalabas na nagpapacute-cute lang*. It's hard."

D-coy is outspoken about his feelings. "There are a lot of hypocrites—people who are using you, people who take advantage of you. But you have to do it because you survive. I've had spats with friends because of money, fame and popularity, but that's not what I'm after. I'm doing this because of my love for the art." His album's name spawns from these sentiments.

"Plastic Age" is D-coy's first solo project. His group, Madd Poets, has been active in the hip-hop scene for a while now. Impressively, the album, which is full of catchy Taglish songs, also includes collaborations with talented Filipino artists—Jamir Garcia of Slapshock, Boom and Rhada of Kulay, Kyla, Chill and Radioactive Sago's Lourd De Veyra.

"I collaborated with them to show people that you can bring hip-hop to a higher level. Before I collaborated with them, I worked for Vibestation. That's how I met them. I'm so thankful they had faith in me."

Among the artists he collaborated with, Lourd and Jamir are his favorites. "I love poetry so much. First time *ko siya naka*-jam, whoa, *nagulat ako*. People think Jamir is hardcore because he's from Slapshock, but he knows so much about music."

His top picks in the album are "Crazy World" and "Sana."

In the future he wishes to collaborate with Joey Ayala, Francis M ("I opened for his show recently") and "this guy who plays the violin. I want to make a song that will have an orchestra playing."

D-coy fancies himself to be an evangelist of sorts. "I want Pinoys to be able to relate to the album. I want hip-hop to reach out to Filipinos. Like with my song 'Safe Sex,' I want to prove that we can be entertaining *kahit hindi bastos*. That people can learn from us. All my songs are positive."

When asked to sum up the message of his album in one statement, he says, "Think positive. Nothing is impossible." An ironic statement from someone named after the lure of danger.

Steadfast

Despite all the difficulties, D-coy remains steadfast in his love for his work. He says the best thing about it is "freedom of expression. It's a way of expressing myself. This is my outlet. And the fact that I get to entertain people. Although some people don't understand, I try to make them. And that I get to travel and tour."

And the worst? "Not being appreciated and the negative comments."

D-coy takes everything in stride and believes that he was really meant to make music. "I think this is what I know. This is what I can do." While he doesn't intend to rap forever, he knows music will always be a part of his life. "Maybe by that time I'll have my own company or record label. I want to produce albums."

His ultimate dreams reflect his deepest passion. "I want the hip-hop scene to be recognized. I'd like to have my own record label..." He drifted off. Lest we think he is after personal glory, he continues, "... to help other artists."

He claims to work well under pressure. "We have to get used to doing songs on the spot. My energy is high when I'm in the studio. Pressure works for me."

When he is not busy promoting his album and writing more songs, he reverts to his simple lifestyle. "I hardly go out of the house. I watch TV, write poetry, cook and read hip-hop magazines."

D-coy relaxes by listening to jazz, reggae and mellow R&B tunes. "I get drained when I write songs so after that, I listen to mellow music."

When asked what makes him different, without missing a beat, he says, "I'm so humble." I wait to see if it was an attempt at humor. Nope. It wasn't.

D-coy has words of inspiration for aspiring rappers. "*Tiis lang*. Wait for your time to shine. *Darating 'yung* time *na lahat ng paghihirap mo babalik sa 'yo*."

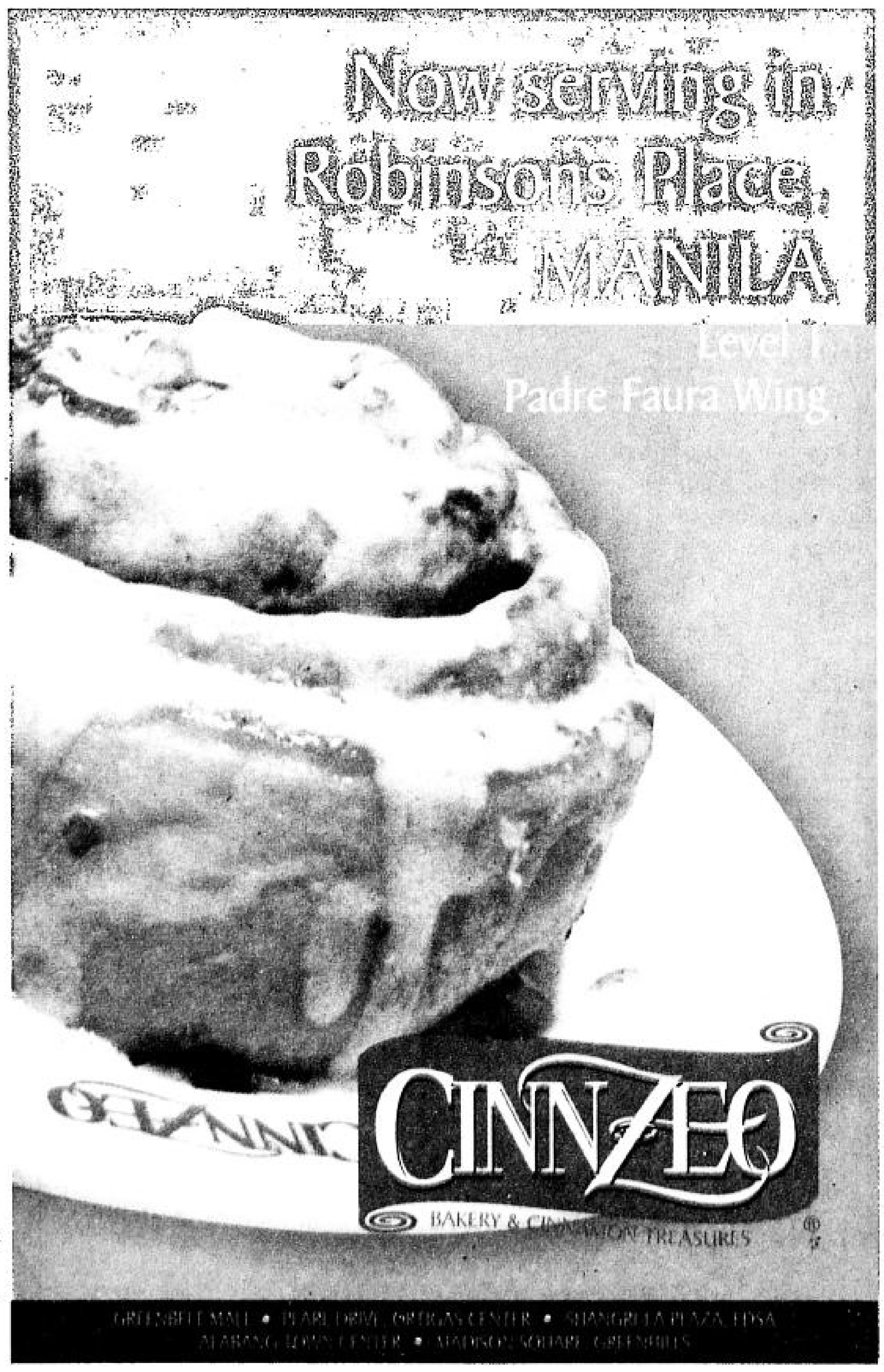
Sort of like what's happening to him now.

The little interlude that became the reason for this interview hardly says anything about the man behind the music. And this interview merely scratches the surface of a whole movement of passionate souls still waiting to be heard.

We have a lot to learn.

E-mail the author at cookiedoughjunkie@yahoo.com

"I WANT hip-hop to reach out to Filipinos."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Elegant and classic holiday wear

THE HOTTEST upcoming brands in the market were highlighted during the Last Quarter Fashion Show held at the Robinsons Place Manila recently. Presented by Prime Diva Productions, the fashion showcase featured Bayo, Plain & Prints and Dickies Jeans.

Fresh faces modeled wearable casuals in black and white, baby blues, red khaki, navy blues and white, and pink and creme outfits that transcended the generic to individualistic style. Wraparound tops and garrison and belts accented the outfits.

Bayo designer Yvette Lejano incorporated what's hot in the international scene and what their market in the country considers wearable. The Bayo market's age range is from 14-35.

Lejano described the Bayo collection for Christmas and the coming New Year as "simple, elegant and classic."

Asked why they chose Lea Salonga as their image model for the brand, Bayo GM Pinky Estrebillo says she epitomizes the timeless wearability and casual chic that Bayo clothes represent.

Plains & Prints, on the other hand, gives everyone a lot of options on colors. Their collection has classic lines with unique details—all with the good cut that provides comfort and style.

Roxanne Ang Farillas, owner of Plains & Prints, says colors should go beyond the traditional red and green this season. Plains & Prints presented several designs for the coming holidays that are available in bright red, coral, fresh mint and orange. Incorporating the latest stretch and Lycra fabrics in their design also gives a distinctive freshness to their collection.

Although the brand is associated with the young market, Farillas says their clientele ranges from teenagers to those in their early '40s. "What makes our designs worth buying is that the look that Plains & Prints designs are basic and simple and can be worn even two to three years from now."

Dickies Jeans, one of the more popular brands in the US endorsed by high profile celebrities like Madonna, sponsored the opening day concert of True Faith for the three-day fashion showcases.

Young . . .

(From page D1)

the 24th and get candy that's in a sock hung by the bed. Then we go down and watch Christmas movies—some people go to church—then we have a great dinner, then we open the presents at around 6 p.m. on the 24th. Because most people, at least in America, they open their presents on the 25th. They get up in the morning and it's just... (Pretends to rip open tons of presents).

Marit: (Laughs) They do! They just tear the presents open.

Marion: In Norway we open them like, one by one...

Marit: And it gets dark really early so it's like, everything is usually covered in white snow and the sky is filled with stars at like, 4 or 5 p.m. It's beautiful. (Smiles dreamily) I love Christmas! (Wails) I can't wait!

Marion: And I can't wait to eat Christmas cakes and goodies!

Marit: I know! (Gushes) I'm gonna start baking the day I get home!

Marion: Gingerbread man and stuff.

What's on the top of your Christmas list?

Marion: I want drums. I've been saying that in every interview and I'm hoping my Dad has heard it. But I really want drums and I want to start practicing and get really good. My Mom says it is okay for me to practice when they're at work. Because I do "home school" I can practice the drums when they're away.

Marit: Um... I don't know. I guess just the fact that we're coming home is such a thrill. I love candles. I hope I get tons of candles because I burn my candles all the time and they're just...

Marion: Oh good, because I don't know what to buy you, so... (Laughs) I have no idea what to buy Marit!

Marit: You can never have enough candles. Ever.

You like incense and stuff?

Marit: Yeah, I love scented candles. (Starts getting giddy) I love scented candles! (Marion looks at her weirdly) I miss my room so much!

What are the top five Christmas songs for M2M?

Marion: I like "White Christmas."

Marit: "Silent Night."

Marion: And "O Holy Night." And there's this Norwegian song called (gives the title in Norwegian) that means "Let's Light 10,000 Christmas Candles."

Marit: Oh, that's my favorite song! (Laughs)

Marion: And we also have this other Norwegian Christmas song that means "A Star is Shining Tonight." And also "Baby, Please Come Home."

Marit: (Starts singing) "They're singing deck the halls, but it's not like Christmas at all..." (Laughs)

(I had to ask the question) Are you dating any of the kids from Hanson?

Marion: No, we're not. We don't have boyfriends.

Marit: Nope.

Marion: Um... Not anymore. (Laughs)

What was it like touring with them though?

Marit: It was great.

Marion: They were one of our favorite bands so it was great touring with them because we got to see a great concert like, every day. And they're really great people and really talented, and I love their music. I even love their Christmas album.

Marit: They're great people and we had tons of fun.

So what's in store for M2M in 2002?

Marit: We're *really* hoping to go on tour here.

Marion: January and February we'll be in America promoting our new album, then in March I think we'll be going to Europe, and then we'd love to come back to Asia in April or May to have a concert tour.

Last question: what are your guilty pleasures?

Marit: Listening to the new 'N Sync single. (Laughs) We love the "Gone" song!

Marion: We're like, "Gone." It's the only track we like on the album, so yeah, that's a guilty pleasure!

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Average teen gives advice on how to be a happy one

By Tammy David
2bU! Correspondent

LAST Nov. 28, I ditched coffee with Cher Tiu to have dinner with Andrew Matthews, author and illustrator of books like "Being Happy" and "Making Friends," who was in town to promote his latest book, "Being a Happy Teenager."

I didn't know him but I found out later that he wrote those books my sisters were reading years back. I'm not really a fan of self-help books because they remind me of my CLE textbooks and cheesy teen shows with the "You can do it!" mantra.

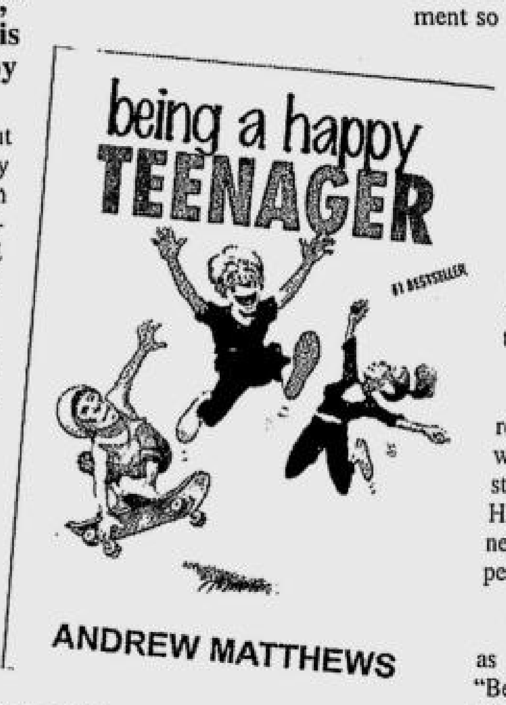
I bought a copy of "Teenager" at Powerbooks first before rushing to Tower Club for the dinner. I thought I could leave early and meet up with Cher but it was a formal dinner and guests were taking their time eating each course. I was the only kid and, worse, I was underdressed.

They put me in the hot seat, asking me every now and then about what our generation does. My dad asked, "What do you kids think of this event—Mr. Matthews coming here? Hit *ba*?" I blurted, "Honestly, Dad, with 400 bucks, I'd rather buy a CD." Across the table, Mr. Matthews just nodded and smiled. Phew!

After talking about the usual problems among teenagers in the country and the rest of the world (with so many problems to discuss, the dinner lasted until 12). I finally managed to interview him. He even drew something for 2bU! at the back of my questionnaire. I asked him about how he started, what he thought of this generation and what books he'd give to President George Bush and Osama bin Laden.

Why made you write these books?

In my mid-20s I became really interested in why some people seemed to be happier than I was. (It seemed to me that) people who have had more difficult lives and bigger challenges were happier than those who had things easy. I wondered why. I was also trying to find out why some people don't get depressed even if they have to deal with problems. Some people lead interesting lives while others get stuck. So I suppose it was because I was searching for those answers and trying to clarify an attitude and a strategy that weren't for me that I wrote my first book "Being Happy." It was really an experiment because I do cartoons; I illustrate my own books. I thought maybe I could create a book that was a little bit more interesting than some of the books I've read about personal development so that's where it all started.



People who have had more difficult lives and bigger challenges seemed happier than those who had things easy

When did you first realize you could write?

It was really after "Being Happy" was published. (People were) starting to say to me "You know this book really reached me" and the book sales took off. That's when I really understood that I could reach people. Before that, in school, I seemed to bluff my way through... you know, write about the stuff I didn't really know...

Just to impress the teachers?

Yeah! You do a book review just by reading the back cover of the book. So it was tough! But it was only when people started to say "Hey, this book 'Being Happy' had a big impact on me." But I never thought that my books would touch people like that.

Were you a happy teenager?

Yeah, I was sort of an average teenager as you can see from the early pages of "Being a Happy Teenager." (Showing page 10 of the book) I was a tiny kid. I was a bit like a naughty teenager but I was always a little guy. I was like a foot shorter than all of the girls, which really used to hurt. You say "I love you" then they say "Come back when you grow up" and stuff like that. I think I was pretty average, but in many ways "Being a Happy Teenager" was the kind of book that I wished I had.

What one issue among teenagers bothers you the most?

I find the drugs issue really scary because it wasn't a part of my teenage years 30 years ago. Also because I grew up in the country so I think drugs are so scary. (It) can just sort of ruin or end a life overnight.

If you can give just one message to the teens, what would it be?

Well, about drugs, one of the messages that I give you in the book is: "You don't need to try it to find out that it's bad." Sometimes friends would say "Well if you haven't tried it, how do you know?" It's like what I said in the book, if you see somebody hitting himself with a hammer you don't say, well it doesn't look good but I'll try it so that I can experience it. I mean it's just dangerous and dumb. Drugs are in that department. You can't afford to do it. There are a few things that we need to be as teens and we need to be less critical of ourselves. We don't expect ourselves to be perfect. We do our best and we accept that.

Which of your books would you give to Osama bin Laden?

(Laughs) I think "Making Friends" is more appropriate.

And to President George W. Bush?

"Being Happy" would be for George.

Ok my favorite, name association. Best friend?

My wife Julie (who also happens to be his publisher).

Teenage life?

Being short.

Books?

...And cartoons!

Australia?

Blue sky.

Philippines?

Happy people, friendly people.

Pen?

Cartoon.

Happy face?

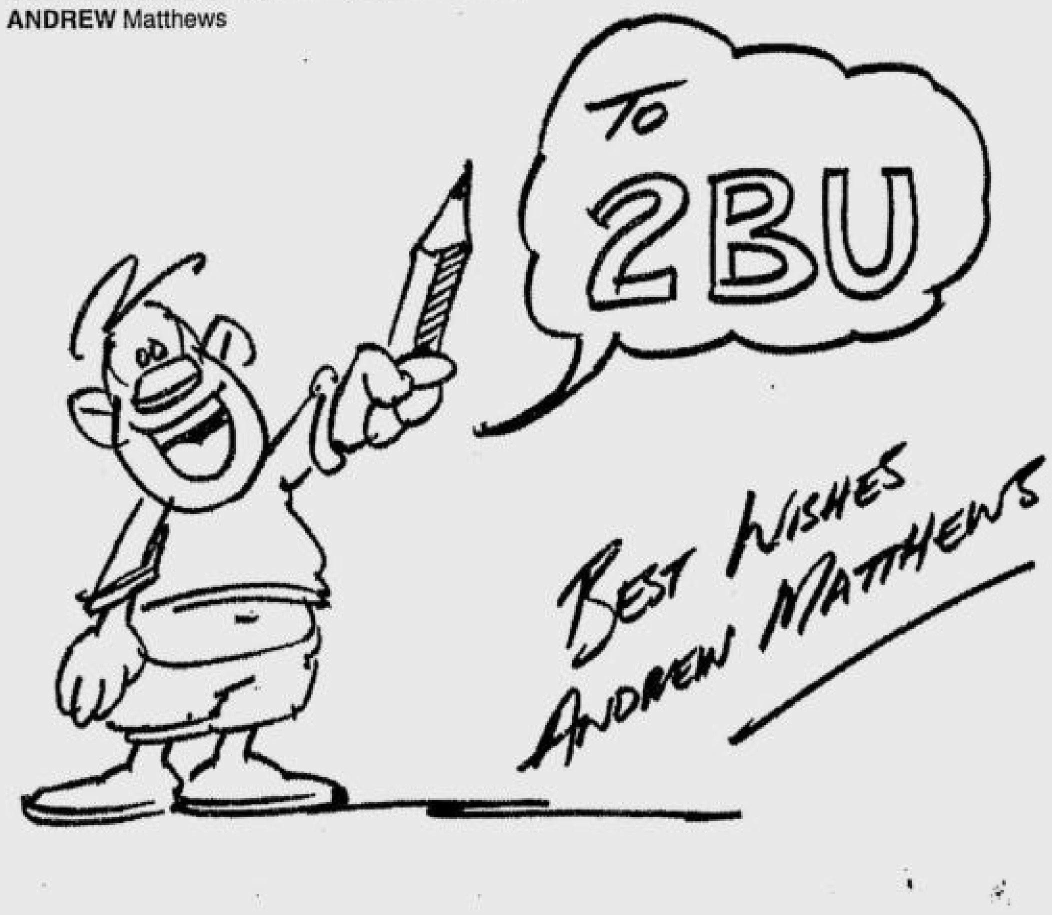
Tammy.

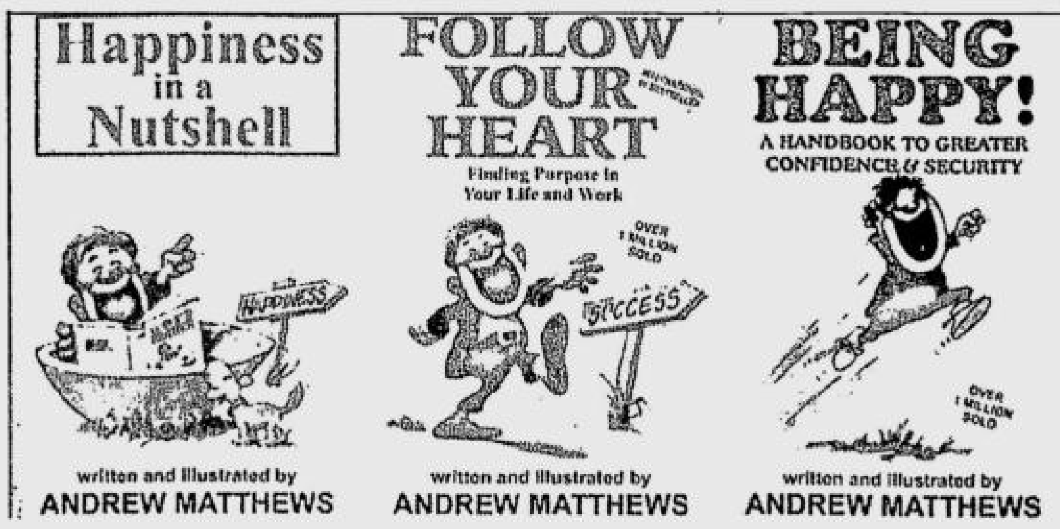
Whatever! *(Laughs)* **Bin laden?**

Bomb!

E-mail the author at chris_trent_thom@lycos.com

ANDREW Matthews

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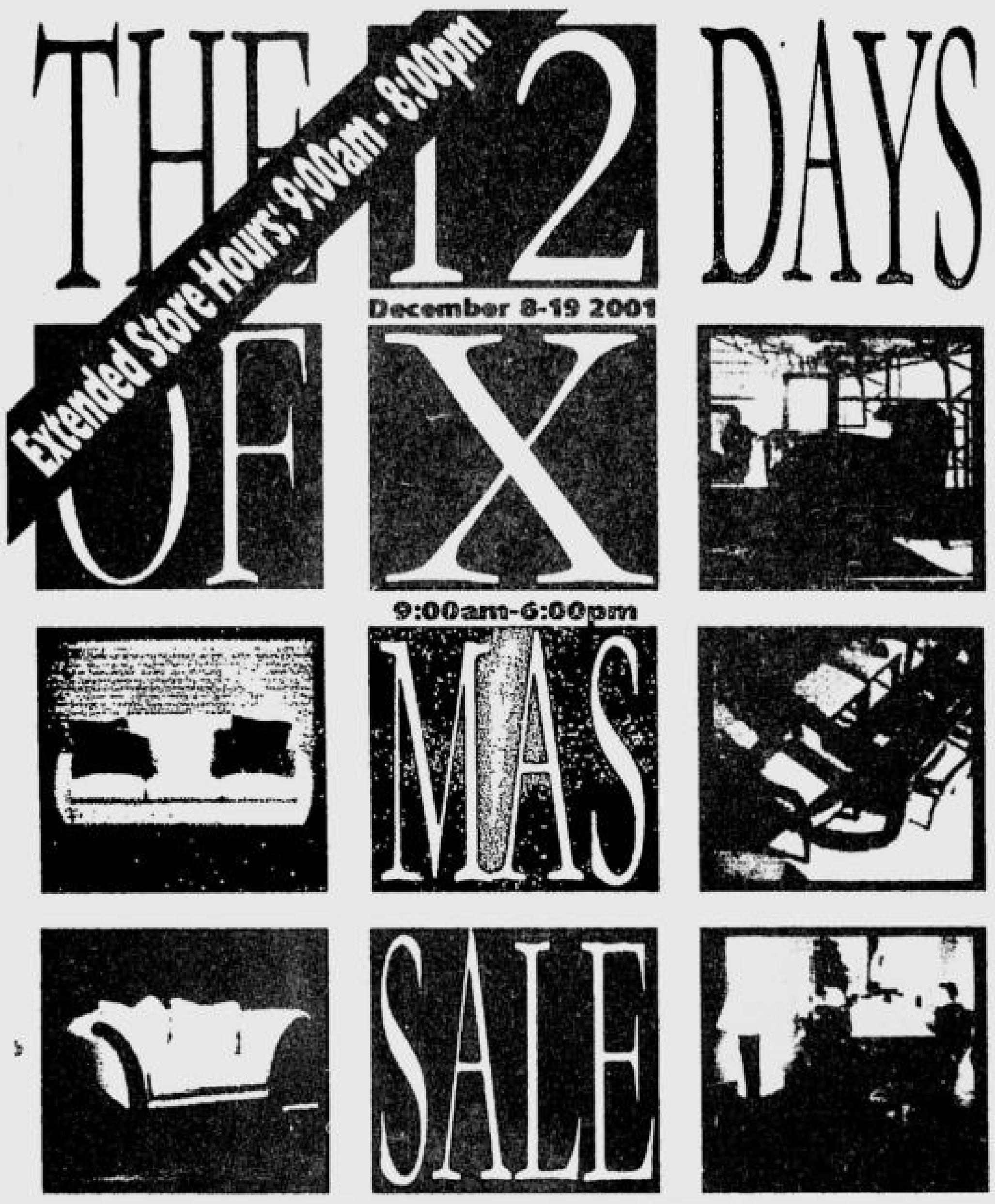
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MTV hosts Asian first

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY TIM YAP

HONG Kong—It is not just going to be any event so I see all roads leading to Singapore on Feb 2, 2002. No, not for some political meeting to discuss the future or a summit of bubble-gum globetrotters out to persuade us into joining their cult.

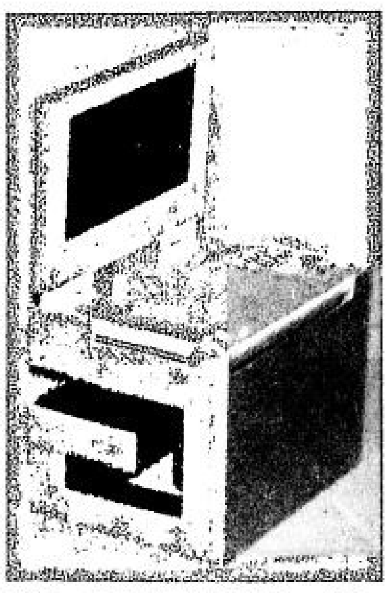
What the event is is an unprecedented gathering of top international celebrities and partyphiles from all over Asia, numbering about 7,000, in the Singapore Indoor Stadium that would be telecast across the continent to more than 150 million households.

Drum roll, please. The 2002 MTV Asia Awards! Yes, you heard me right—our own version of the award famous worldwide for bringing together big name stars in a night of unadulterated, wicked fun. "Believe me, it's going to be big," said Frank Brown, the president of MTV Asia in a press conference here in Harbour City.

To drop a few names, international heartthrob and superstar Ronan Keating will join sultry sensation Mandy Moore on stage as anchor hosts of the show. Pinup favorite, World Wrestling Federation (WWF) star, The Rock, who made his film debut in "The Mummy Returns," will be one of the guest hosts. Names of other Asian hosts and presenters will be announced soon.

Surprise guests

At the press conference, Keating, nominee for Favorite Male Artist, and Hong Kong Favorite Music Artist nominee Nicholas Tse made surprise appearances, much to the delight of the Asian press representatives gathered at the function room of the Hong Kong Convention Center.



AND THE WINNER IS... The winning artist will receive this innovative art piece which pays tribute to the artist on its screen. It doubles as a DVD player.

Also at the press conference were MTV creative guru David Flack, senior vice president for content and creative; Mishal Varma, vice president for programming, representatives of the Singapore Tourism Board and MTV top executives.

The world-famous Cirque Du Soleil will thrill audiences during the awards show with its theatrical performances that is expected to be nothing less than spectacular. Funk meisters Groove Armada, a clubbing cult favorite, will spin their brand of cool tunes at the post-show VIP party.

Ronan Keating, Mandy Moore, the Rock, Cirque du Soleil and Groove Armada are just some of celebrity guests expected for the 2002 MTV Asia Awards

VJ IN HK. Stacy, MTV's veejay from Taiwan, makes her introduction.

YAPARAZZI with Ronan Keating

One thing for sure, the MTV Asia Awards is set to be the biggest ever music awards show that the region will ever see and the first to acknowledge and salute the most popular Asian and international talents.

Online voting

"We're delighted to have such a fantastic lineup of celebrities and guests to join us at the show, which celebrates both the diversity as well as the commonality of youth culture around Asia," said Brown. Indeed, Asia's young people—whether a teenager on the Shanghai Bund, a hip-hopper in Seoul or a text addict in Manila—are likely to be tuned in to Asia's Most Wanted Music Channel for various reasons.

MTV Asia will present 19 different awards, including 10 favorite music artists from Asia awards, six international music awards, one fashion award, one film and one inspiration award.

MTV FRONT ROW. David Flack, Mishal Varma and Frank Brown

But aside from all the shebang, the best thing about the awards is: we get to choose the winners. All award recipients will be decided through votes from viewers across Asia. The open poll started last November and will run till Jan. 18. Check for more details or vote online at www.mtvasiaawards.com.

The winning artist gets to take home the trophy, a technological work of art. The trophy for the first-ever MTV Asia Awards was designed by MTV Asia's David Flack, who also did the MTV Europe Music Awards trophy, among others. Working with Panasonic and Royal Selangor, the cubical trophy is made of pewter. It opens like a box to reveal a multimedia screen that plays a short video tribute to the winner. When the artist gets bored with it, it converts into a mini DVD player. What a steal!

"The intention this year is to blend tradition with cutting-edge technology," Flack said of his cube-shaped design. "The surprise as to what is inside will be the obvious analogy to the show."

Mitsubishi Motors, Panasonic and Smart Communications Inc. are among MTV's partners for the event. Other partners like Tower Records, Music One, Radio City, Odyssey Records, MTV Style, Friday's, Outback and Italianni's in Manila will have voting outlets. Hot, hot voting parties will also be held all over the region to heighten the excitement.

And the nominees are...

For favorite music artist, Philippines: Freestyle, Gary Valenciano, Lea Salonga, Martin Nievera and Regine Velasquez.

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9 Tell Me Side A TONE TELLME
10 Burn Kulay TONE BURN

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Sleuthing to discover Donita Rose's flaws

An extremely busy schedule has left Donita with little time for a love life

By Jules Alcantara
Photos by Romy Homillada

ONE of the really welcome perks of being on the staff of 2bU! is the chance to meet really good-looking, drop-dead gorgeous celebrities. We get to interview them, even party with them. Sometimes we even start believing we are special like them.

Nothing is guaranteed to bring you back to earth quickly than meeting Donita Rose. Yes, *the* Donita Rose.

2bU! met recently with Donita as she dropped by Manila (yes, drop by as she was here for less than 24 hours). When she said hello, my jaws literally dropped and I momentarily lost my bearings. The concept of fairness became alien. It's unfair! She is so beautiful, I thought to myself. It seemed so easy to hate her, as she seemed so perfect. I kept telling myself she had to have a flaw or a problem. I spent the whole afternoon trying to spot a blemish, a flaw, physical or otherwise.

Is there anyone who does not know Donita? You would have to be deaf, mute, blind or to live in the opposite side of the world if you have not heard or seen MTV Asia's most popular VJ. A top celebrity endorser (Globe, Lux and Pepsi, among others), her shows on MTV are not the only ones on heavy rotation but her television commercials as well.

She is usually on lists of top 10 or top five most beautiful women in Asia or this galaxy. Her website, www.donitarose.com was nominated recently in the Philippine Webby Awards' people's choice celebrity site category. It registers hundreds of thousands of page views and hits.

Warm and fun, Donita was genuinely friendly. MTV fans will be delighted to know that she renewed her contract recently with the popular music video channel. "Next year will be my fourth year with MTV. I feel very fortunate," she says proudly. And why not? Practically every other teenager has dreamed of becoming a VJ.

Donita said she was trying to convince her brother, Paul Cavett, to audition for MTV. Paul is currently taking up engineering in one of the universities in the United States.

An extremely busy schedule has left Donita with little time for a love life. Her schedule is so tight that she worked on her birthday (Dec. 5). Apart from her hosting duties on MTV and shooting for her numerous commercial endorsements, she will soon star in a movie with Piolo Pascual. Tentatively called "Nine Mornings," it will be directed by Joey Javier Reyes.

"Nine Mornings" is about a young man (Piolo) who will receive his inheritance if he attends all the nine early morning Masses (Simbang Gabi) before Christmas. Donita is his love interest. She is also due to shoot a new television commercial for Pepsi.

Her schedule may be full but she does not mind the workload. Donita's eyes glowed as she mentioned how much she looked forward to working with Reyes. "He has a genuine passion for his craft," she says admiringly.

She also proudly announced that she had become even more active in her church. A Christian, Donita completed recently her Bible studies at her church in Singapore. "I took classes so I would be more equipped to teach the Bible and to get to know better who I am standing with and speaking for," she explains. When asked how she reconciled her religious principle with the sometimes unpredictable and wild ways of show business, she said she had become choosy with her movie roles. "I have to keep up with the times but I am careful that I do not cross the line," Donita explains.

Is there anything else that someone like her who is truly blessed would still want to have? Actually, yes—spending the holidays with her family and wake boarding in Lake Tahoe.

Beautiful inside and out, it is difficult to sustain any ill feelings against Donita Rose.

But I did find out she had one major problem—the word "exercise" had her immediately passing on the chips. She was definitely bummed out when she realized that she had to skip them after stuffing herself with salpicao and garlic rice. At last, I found common ground with one of show business' most beautiful faces.

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2nd Monthly Draw: Feb. 15, 2002 (33 winners) • Rustan's Gift Certificates worth P10,000 each (8 winners) • Dish Gift Certificates worth P7,000 each (2 winners) • Old Manila Gift Certificates worth P7,000 each (2 winners) • Tivoli Grill Gift Certificates worth P7,000 each (2 winners) • Benkay Gift Certificates worth P7,000 each (2 winners) • Bocarinos Gift Certificates worth P7,000 each (2 winners) • Cash Credits worth P5,000 each (15 winners)

3rd Monthly Draw: March 15, 2002 (33 winners) • Rustan's Gift Certificates worth P10,000 each (8 winners) • Dish Gift Certificates worth P7,000 each (2 winners) • El Comedor Gift Certificates worth P7,000 each (2 winners) • La Primavera Gift Certificates worth P7,000 each (2 winners) • Gloria Maris Gift Certificates worth P7,000 each (2 winners) • Sugi Gift Certificates worth P7,000 each (2 winners) • Cash Credits worth P5,000 each (15 winners)

Grand Draw: April 15, 2002 (5 winners) 1st: P1,000,000.00 (1 winner) 2nd: P500,000.00 (1 winner) 3rd: Trip for 2 to Bangkok (3 winners) (inclusive of: RT airfare, 4D/3N hotel accommodation, complimentary breakfasts & pocket money worth USD $500.)

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4068, Series of 2001.

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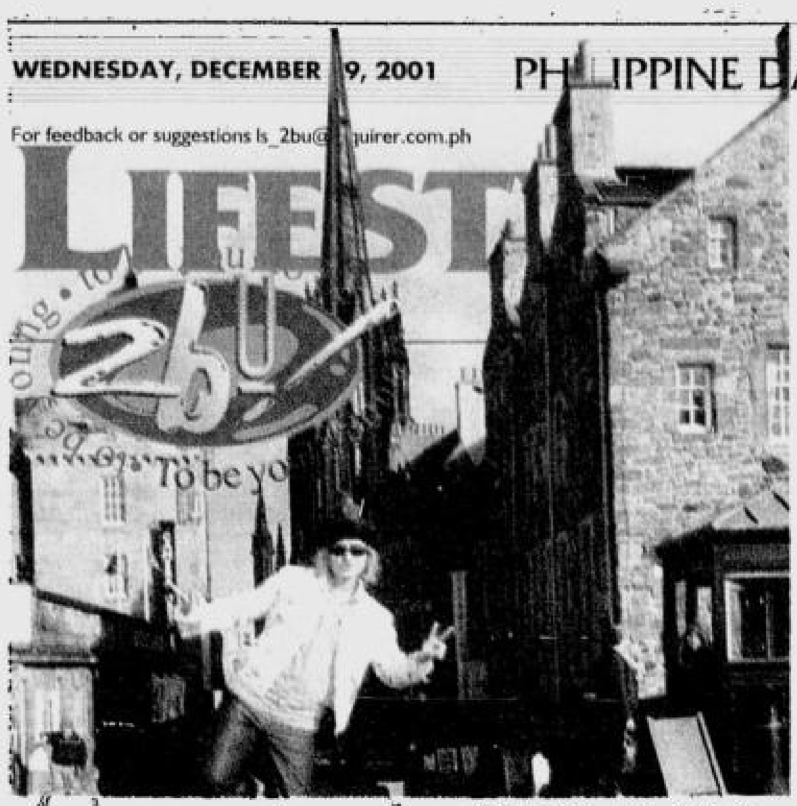

JAP ON A HOP. Savoring the old-world élan at Edinburgh

Scotch savvy in Scotland

NO, it was not the search for the Holy Grail, but something similar. From halfway around the world my hunt brought me to castles in Keith, Speyside and hot spots in Edinburgh, both in Scotland. I conducted a journey of history and heritage, of pride and patience in pursuit of perfection. I was seeking, not for the most ornate Scotsman's kilt (is there one?), but for the smoothest Scotch whisky in the world.

Tim Yap

"The magic's in the artistry of the blend. It's like the cast of a movie. Or a group of friends. You can't point to any one thing as the reason it's so irresistible: it's the way all elements work together," so said Master Blender **James Cryle**, in a tone that would put Sean Connery's "Highlander" to shame, when I asked him what made the best of the best.

Lest you think the "Master Blender" is some tagline for a rap artist, his assignment really is to create that winning combination—spicy, aromatic Highland malts, sweet Lowland malts and pungent and assertive Islay malts plus clean grain whiskies to complete the perfect picture—the Chivas Regal blend. Yo!

Why blend? "The purpose is to create a richer and more rewarding experience by combining the flavors of many outstanding whiskies from different distilleries," James said oh-so-proudly of his whisky gold mine. And blend we did—ABS-CBN Publishing's **Bebeth Timbol**, the Philippine Star's **Joseph Cortes**, along with O&M's events director **Owen Bobadilla** and Bridges@Com's PR partner **Leah Caringal**—during the first day of the "Master Blender Challenge" in far-off Scotland, where host Chivas Regal was celebrating its grand 200th year.

Yes, these Chivas brothers were ahead of their time and raised the art of blending to a new standard of subtlety and refinement, producing world-renowned brands known to us bacchanalians—Chivas Regal, Chivas Regal 18 and Royal Salute.

The Sound of Scotland

Picturesque mountains and ancient towns captured our attention as we drove along the Scottish countryside—it made all of us want to belt out with arms outstretched while going around in circles, "The hills are alive..." Then again, the sheep (which seemed to outnumber the humans at first) might get the impression we had some other sort of grass, so we just strutted toward Linn House, that magnificent Versailles meets Brit boarding house where we stayed. This baronial fortress was built 1878 with 5 acres of garden which stretched down to the banks of the river Isla. It even had a waterfall! Talk about great scenery.

SCOTCH/P. E2

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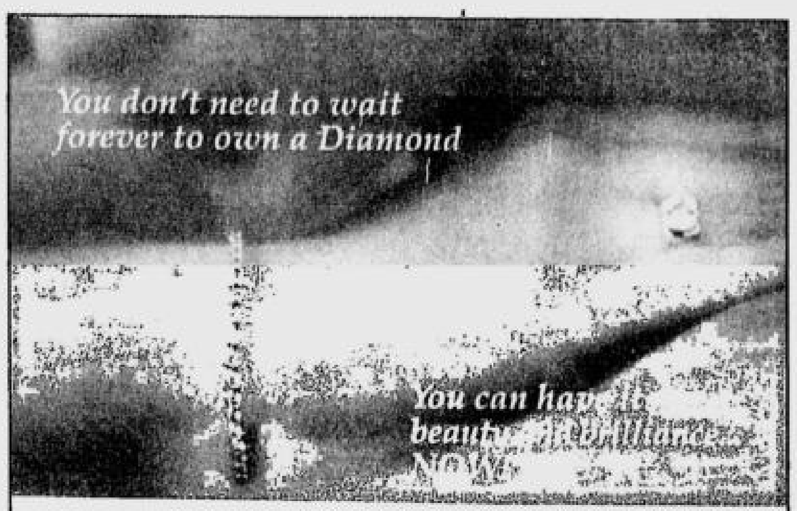
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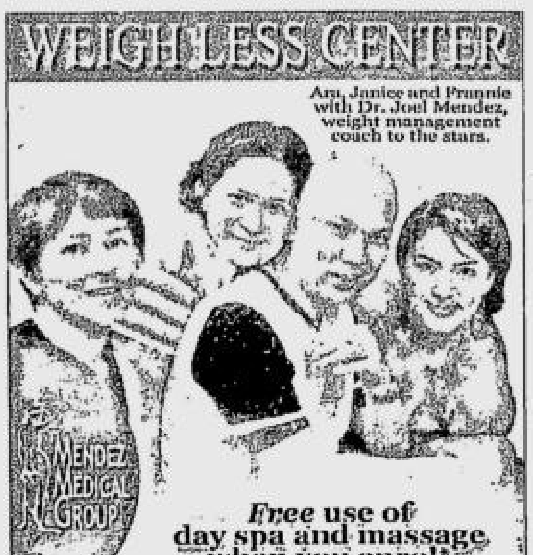
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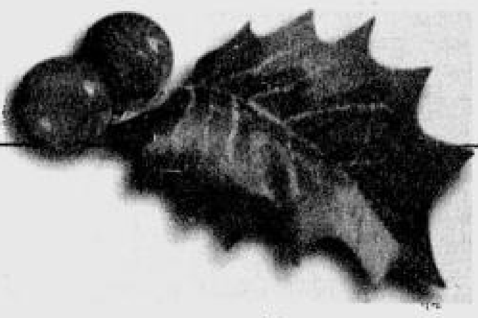

Christmas carols at Greenbelt 1 Café Row.

From December 14 to 23, 7PM, the true nature of the season comes alive with holiday hymns sung by the heavenly voices of Augustinian Larks (Dec. 14) + Sto. Domingo Male Choir (Dec. 15) + Miriam Liturgical Choir (Dec. 16) + U.P. Concert Chorus (Dec. 17) + CSA Choir (Dec. 18) + DLSU Choir (Dec. 19) + San Beda College Glee Club (Dec. 20) + Kilyawan Boy's Choir (Dec. 21) + Ateneo Glee Club (Dec. 22) + Tiples de Sto. Domingo (Dec. 23)

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DOE, A DEER, A FEMALE DEER... The sound of Scotland is well and alive with good food, great company and the smoothest scotch whisky in the world.

WE STAYED HERE. Linn House looks like an old romantic palace.

CHIVAS CHILL. My favorite part of Linn House

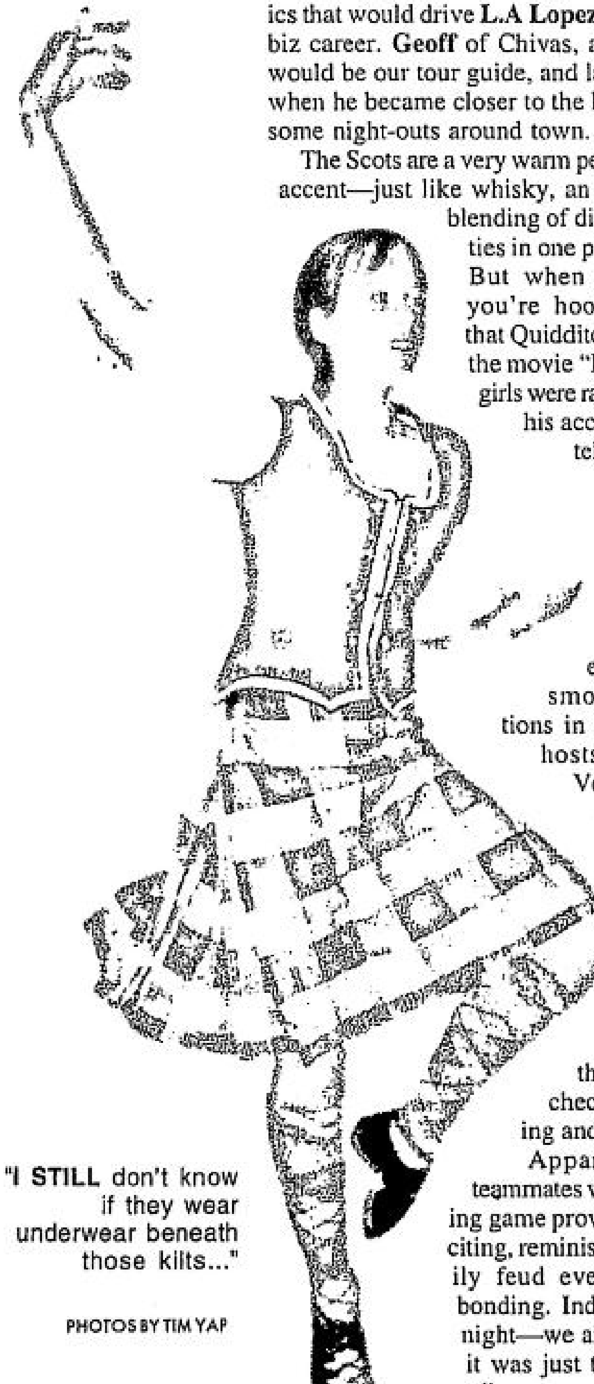
savvy in Scotland

(From page E1)

At Linn House, we learned how scotch whisky was made—the essential raw materials, the water, the barley, the yeast and most important, the people and the heritage. We had taste tests the whole day, comparative flavors and more flavors—I was sure Erap would have loved to be in my shoes.

Maureen, our house-mistress and nanny with an endearing high-pitched voice would greet us with "Care for some Chivas?" at any given time of the day (even breakfast), with vocal acrobatics that would drive **L.A Lopez** to quit his showbiz career. **Geoff** of Chivas, a Scottish native, would be our tour guide, and later on, playmate when he became closer to the Pinoy group after some night-outs around town.

The Scots are a very warm people with a funny accent—just like whisky, an acquired taste, a blending of different personalities in one pulsating package. But when you're hooked, you're hooked. Remember that Quidditch team captain in the movie "Harry Potter" that girls were raving about? From his accent alone, I could tell he was Scottish.



"**I STILL** don't know if they wear underwear beneath those kilts..."

PHOTOS BY TIM YAP

Chivas chill

Back at the whisky whorehouse, just when we were all savoring the effects of the smoothest concoctions in our systems, our hosts (in their best Vegas outfits) all of a sudden had this great idea for a trivia game show, the mind-bending Chivas Triple Challenge. Philippines vs India. Or they just wanted to check who was listening and who wasn't.

Apparently, my teammates were. So the resulting game proved to be quite exciting, reminiscent of those family feud evenings of family bonding. India got lucky that night—we aimed for revenge, it was just the first day after all.

The next day, we had to wake up early to leave for Elgin, where Moray Leisure Center was, for the Chivas Chill World Cup—as second round of the Philippines-India budding rivalry. It was "curling" this time, a Scottish sport on ice. Think ice hockey, only with brooms or "Disney on Ice" goes "Harry Potter," minus the golden snitch. We won this time—the Chivas Chill World Cup belongs to the Philippines! Applause, applause.

From there we did a distillery tour, with our guides exuding pride and so much reverence for the house that whisky built as they toured us around Strathisla, Glenlivet and Glen Grant with the same zest as I would when taking foreigner friends on a night out in Malate. This was where each whisky barrel was aged—12 years in oak casks, and often much longer. There we saw for ourselves the whole whisky process—the malting, milling, mashing, fermentation, distillation and maturation—otherwise called six steps to heaven. Go figure.

Piece de resistance

The seventh step was about to happen that night—it was time for us to wear our skirts, uh, I mean kilts! "Pride of Scotland" was emblazoned over the package that had my name, as these tartans were family heirlooms (to protect the family jewels, I presume?) and were treated with so much pride and respect.

On my first night in knee-high socks and checkered skirt, I felt like an exchange student of an exclusive girls school. It felt different, cold in fact to have my backside touching the leather of the chair, because my skirt kept rising up. Good thing my Chivas kept me warm. Thank you, Miss Manners.

Then came the piece de resistance—haggis. Defined, it is a Scottish delicacy of lamb parts cooked in a pig's stomach and steamed. It was presented with such royalty that I thought, wow—this must be some prime rib of a dish. Until they told me it was an innards fiesta, meaning, intestines, pancreas, liver all thrown in a blender to form a circular dinosaur-shaped egg. Yum. Add a dash of Chivas on it (like how the Chinese add soy sauce to rice) as what our well-meaning hosts did—and double wow.

After the drinks, the piano room was the next stop, where a full Scottish young orchestra performed with great delight—it was refreshing to see young people so proud of their culture. They didn't have that this-is-so-corny-native-folk-dance kind of attitude. They loved it and they shared what they had with pride. We can learn a couple of things from our European siblings.

Spontaneity ruled the rest of the night as the Pinoy bunch sang an excerpt from "Annie"—the immortal anthem "Tomorrow." That despite O&M's Owen bringing some minus one tapes for some even cheesier Tagalog songs. Karaoke was the next logical entertainment after the pianist left, with Bebeth hogging the microphone till we all decided to go to bed—not because of Bebeth's singing, mind you, but because we still had a full day ahead of us. Tomorrow is indeed another day.

Chivas Royale

After learning all about whisky, we needed to enjoy it in the best surroundings—so we went all over Edinburgh and London, hopping from one elite eatery to another, to hip bars and hot clubs. At Edinburgh we stayed at the Bonham, a very contemporary hotel in an old city. We checked out the clubs that Wednesday night—they were all playing old-school music. High school nostalgia popped in as they grooved to the hits of this '80s trash bash.

London was our last stop. Here we were joined by **Tony Valdez,** Seagram's premier Asian asset as he played host to our hopping from the Hyatt Carlton Tower to Hush and Zeta, exclusive London hubs for the hip and the happening. Attitude reigned from the door to the bar, Chivas being the constant in all the spots.

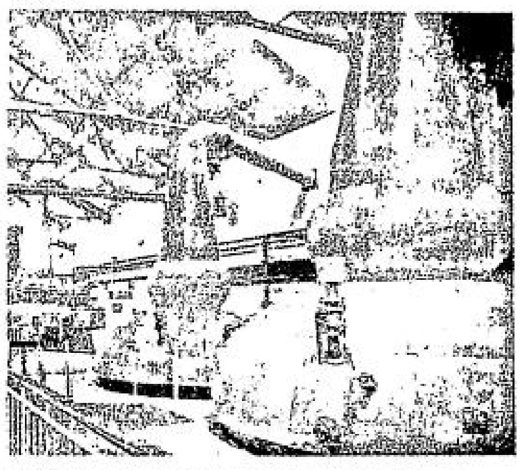
My favorite was Chivas Royale. Take a chilled champagne flute and fill it with crushed ice. Pour in one shot of Chivas Regal, a dash of apple schnapps or clear apple juice and top up with ginger ale. Add a slice of green apple, stir and voila! You are ready to party, buddy! How's that for Bartending 101?

So after all of this, did I find what I was looking for? Yes, and more! I can now distinguish a single malt from a triple blend, and know how to mix my own drinks. I have learned how to behave in a skirt, modulate and act manly while singing a red head orphan's song, and smile as I munch on some animal's insides.

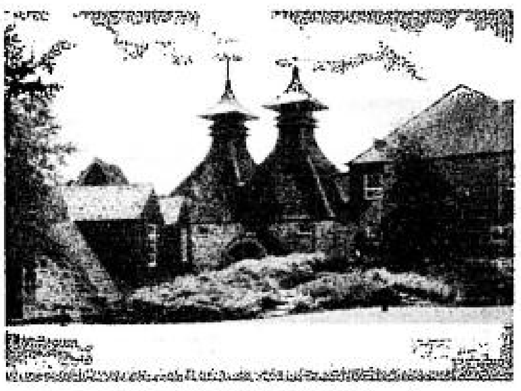
It does make a difference, "when you know."

Our resident party chronicler learns about the different malts that go into Scotch whiskey, mix potent drinks and wear the Scottish quilt like a well-behaved 'colegiala'

HIT me baby, one more time! Scottish boy's version of Britney



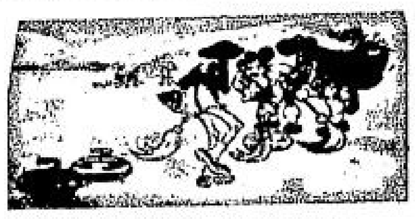
THIS is where your whisky is going..."



STRATHISLA DISTILLERY. The home and heart of Chivas Regal

READY,GET SET,SWEEP. Leah Caringal tries her hand at curling

TAKE IT OFF. Joseph Cortes, your columnist and the bagpipe man after the Highland dinner at Linn House



OF BROOMS AND LEGS. Curling is a favorite Scottish sport

A CHIVAS celebration for 200 years

JIM Cryle, Chivas master blender

OLD SCHOOL. '80s tunes and R&B rule the Edinburgh spots.

MISTRESS BLENDER. Bebeth Timbol mixing it up.

"**DISTILLING** is a science, blending is an art." Nosing is a skill. Your columnist in a scotch savvy mood.

AT ASIA de Cuba in London's Saint Martin's Lane were Bebeth Timbol, Leah Caringal, Owen Bobadilla and Tony Valdez, head honcho of Chivas Regal

2BU!'S 2001

Surviving Christmas shopping

It would certainly make Christmas less festive if you complete your shopping list but misplace a kid in the process

ILLUSTRATION: JED ESTRADA

PAY only for merchandise you really want.

You wouldn't want to pay for something you thought was new but is actually old. Ask for fresh stock, if available. Check before you pay that you got the color, size and style you wanted. If you are getting the last item available, make sure the item is still in good, tip-top shape. Don't forget to check for damages, stains or, if applicable, even the expiry date. Make sure the store checker does not put the stamp or write with a red pen on the actual merchandise to cause a nasty stain. Review the receipt and count your change before leaving the store so you can have the necessary corrections made immediately.

Don't do your shopping on Christmas Eve.

Panic buying never did anyone good. You either hoard useless amounts of figurines, teddy bears, picture frames and photo albums no one really wants or you end up getting more expensive items, having no time to canvass prices. Then you will also have to deal with the problem wrapping your gifts. By this time, wrapping counters in some stores already extend from Divisoria to Megamall. Plan ahead and buy your gifts as soon as possible.

Draw a mental map before going shopping.

Know where you're going. If you're not familiar with the place, bring along someone who is. This would save you hours of running around in circles, asking everyone for direction and, generally, contributing to the already madding state of the place. Ask for the shortest way in and out of the mall and where you can easily get a parking space, if you are driving.

Function must absolutely come before fashion.

Forget the spiked heels and the tight tanks. This is not the time to look like little Miss Porma. Wear your hair in the most un-fussy way and use the most comfortable pair of shoes you have. Blisters and painful toes couldn't possibly be part of your Christmas wish list. Leave the ostentatious jewelry and watches at home, locked up in the vault, if you have one. Remember, you're going to the mall to shop, not for a photo shoot.

Walk fast, walk smart.

Cell phone snatchers, holduppers and pickpockets are most active during the holidays. Bag slashing and snatching are common. Leave those big knapsacks at home. Stay sharp and on the look out for people who might be trailing you. Of course, you could also walk around with a sign on your head that says, "*Anak ako ng* mafia." But then salesladies and waiters would probably also stay away from you.

Do a regular mental inventory of your packages and everything else you brought along with you (children included).

It's very, very easy to lose a bag or two while zipping through the mall. The Christmas air leaves many people lost and absent-minded. If possible, leave your packages inside your car or in baggage counters. And please remember that your child is much more valuable than those lovely things on sale. It would certainly make Christmas less festive if you complete your shopping list but misplace a kid in the process.

Get your gear ready.

Bring all the cash, credit cards, discount cards, frequent shopper's card, gift checks, coupons and other shopping aid you'll be needing.

It may seem paranoid, but know the emergency and fire exits of the place where you will shop.

With all that's going on in the world right now, there is always the possibility—even if extremely remote—for something nasty to happen. (Knock on wood.) Safety must always be a primary consideration. Malls get extremely stuffy and crowded; you wouldn't want to get trampled on by panicking shoppers when some dufus with nothing better to do yells, "Bomb! Bomb!" and ruins your life forever.

Put your money in a safe place so you don't lose it.

Remember the golden rule.

People just get friendlier by the minute, don't you agree? Elbowing and foot-tramping are only two common practices popularized by eager-beaver shoppers nationwide. It's so easy to lose your temper and be rude when somebody else grabs the toy you have been eyeing and gets in front of you in the line where you have stood for ages. Just smile and keep a nauseatingly perky attitude while going about your business.

Don't drink too much water.

You'll have an excruciating time trying to hold it in while waiting in line and basking in the "wonderful" scent of the comfort room. I'm not asking you to dehydrate yourself for a whole day. Just drink in moderation and give a little consideration to your much-abused bladder.

Call ahead.

If you know exactly what you want from a particular store, use that long-forgotten landline in your house to check where you can find the merchandise you want, saving yourself the arduous trips through the crazy streets of Manila.

Margot C. Tan

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER My WISH BOX WAVE 89.1 SOFT FAVORITES ALL THE TIME

DO YOU WANT TO WIN THESE FABULOUS CD'S AND A SHEAFFER FOUNTAIN PEN?

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GUNTER NORIS Christmas Evergreens
RAY CONIFF More Xmas Hits
SHEAFFER FOUNTAIN PEN

NAME:__________ AGE:_____
ADDRESS:__________
FAX:__________ PHONE:__________
CELL:__________ EMAIL:__________
Tune in to Wave 89.1 for the Announcement of the Day's Winner

Today's prize courtesy of Hallmark ALPHA records

HINT: Check out *Lifestyle's Tastes section* on Thursday, December 20, for Inquirer's My Wish box.

"Ravioli night, the stars are brightly shining..."

Fine dining and music al fresco at Greenbelt 2.

Featuring soon-to-open Greenbelt 2 restaurants : Bizu Patisserie, Gloria Maris Fine Dining, Italianni's, Kid Creole, Magnum, Sugi, Uva.

Greenbelt. A new experience in dining and entertainment amidst the greens.

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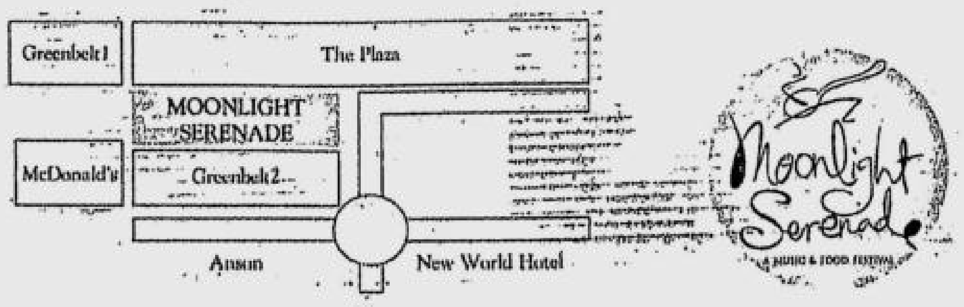
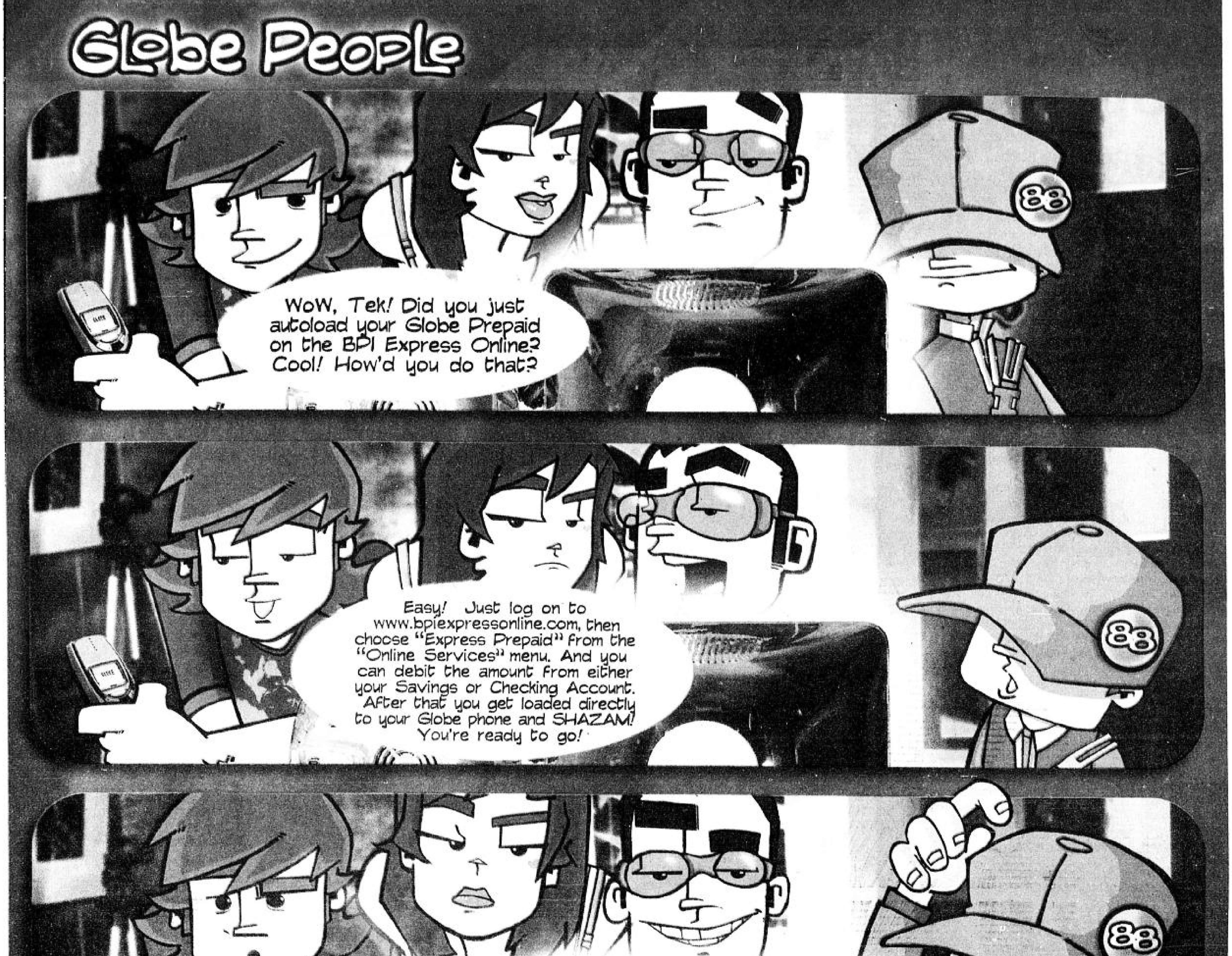


Performances start at 8PM
December 14 Richard Merck
December 15 MPO Strings w/ Michelle Gallaga & Yamani
December 19 Sabor Latino
December 21 Ugoy-Ugoy Band with Lyn Sherman
December 22 Bo Razon/Puro Ritmo


Globe People
WoW, Tek! Did you just autoload your Globe Prepaid on the BPI Express Online? Cool! How'd you do that?
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LIFESTYLE

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FORMULA
Mall Tour

Make way for Star Records' talented quintet when they perform cuts from their latest album, GENUFLECT.

Dec. 20, Thursday, 4PM
Orosa Atrium
Robinsons Place Manila

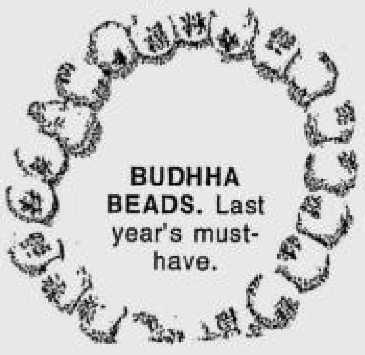
Dec. 21, Friday, 4PM
Central Atrium
Robinsons Place Novaliches

ROBINSONS Malls
Visit us at www.robinsonsland.com

THE 2BU! YEAR-ENDER SURVEY

VOTE for the BEST and WORST of year 2001

SPORTS fanatics love Martina Hingis.


BUDHHA BEADS. Last year's must-have.

AMONG LAST year's winners were the Backstreet, Rivermaya, The Corrs, Destiny's Child, Slapshock, Limp Bizkit and Matchbox 20, Santana's "Smooth," Magic 89.9 in the music category. In the film category, "Charlie's Angels," Glorietta 4 Cinemas, Joshua Jackson, Keanu Reeves and Julia Roberts reigned supreme.

In the fashion world, Marcus Schenkenberg, Antonio Sabato Jr. and Troy Montero, Giselle Bundchen, Angel Aquino, Brando Umali, Ronald Pasion, Rajo Laurel and Inno Sotto got the thumbs-up. Shoppers voted for their favorite stores—People Are People, Tower Records, Beauty Bar, Anonymous and the *tiangges* in Greenhills.

Must-have accessories were "What Would Jesus Do?" bracelets, silver jewelry and beads, beads. When it came to print, "Harry Potter" and his creator J.K. Rowling were the big winners. The comic-book-cum magazine Culture Crash also had tons of followers clamoring for more. Pulp and Candy got the thumbs-up.

Tequila Joe's, Friday's and Kenny Rogers all shared the No. 1 spot on the Best Restaurant list. McDonald's was still considered the Best Fast Food. Sports fanatics voted for Martina Hingis and DLSU's basketball team. Couch potatoes just loved PLDT's "Hello Billy," "Dawson's Creek's" Katie Holmes and Lisa Kudrow. Donita was still everyone's favorite VJ.

Technofreaks hailed Pinoyexchange.com as the top website, Counterstrike as Best Game of the Year and Nokia phones as the best gadgets. Who will be the big winners of 2001?

We want you to be the judge again. Tell us who you think deserve to be hailed the Best and Worst of 2001 under the following categories:

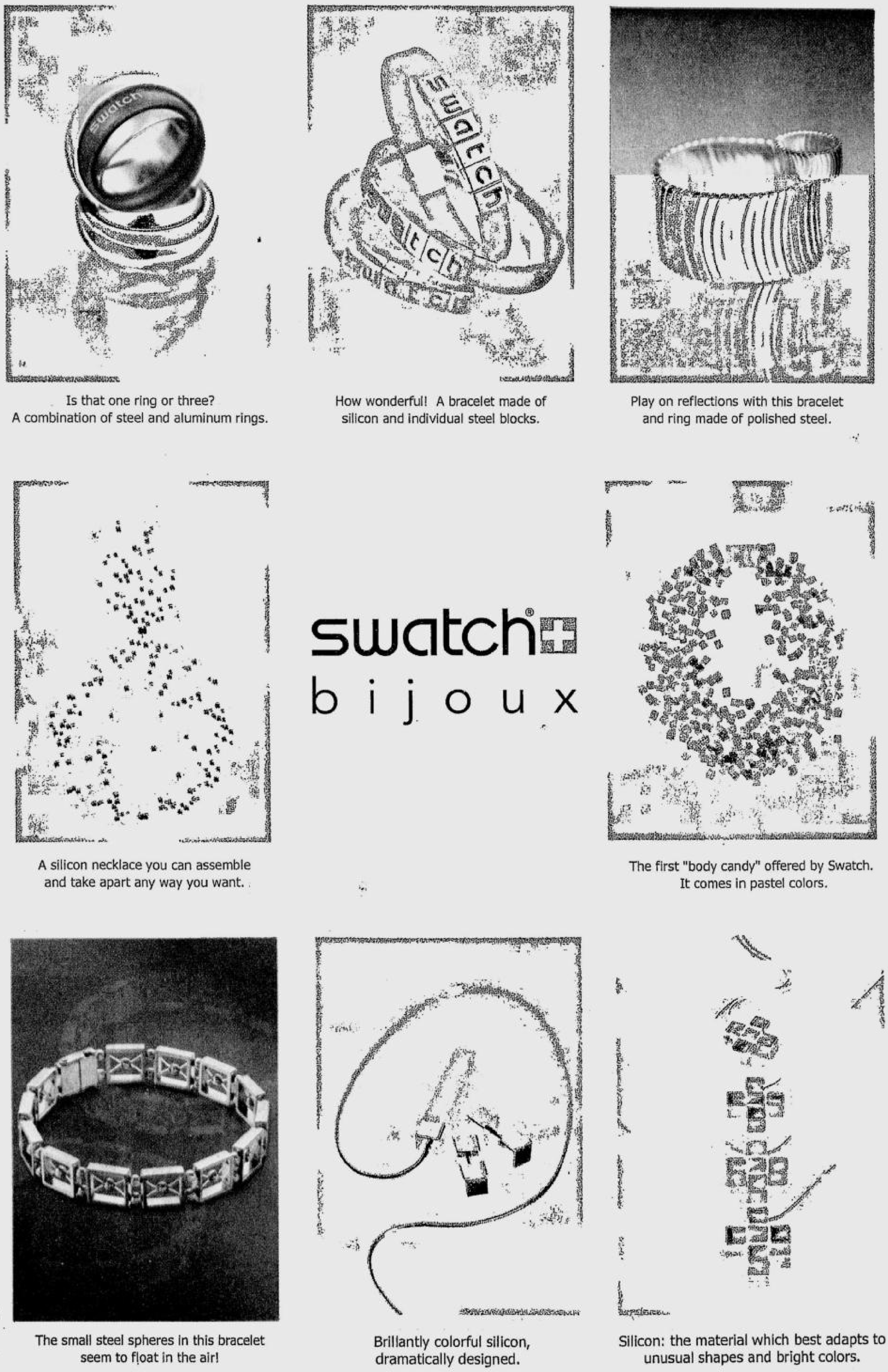
Music:
Band
Song
Singer
Radio station
Music video
Album packaging
Film:
Movie
Movie theater
Actor
Actress
Fashion:
Male model
Female model
Fashion designer
Brand Shop Trend
Accessory
Fashion icon
Health and beauty:
Beauty product
Salon
Hairstyle
Fitness regimen
Literature:
Book
Writer
Magazine
Food:
Restaurant
Dish
Fast food
Sports:
Athlete
UAAP team
Television:
Commercial
Television show
Television actress
Television actor
VJ
Music channel
Technology:
Website
Gadget
Game

Send your answers to 2bU! Best and Worst of 2001 Poll, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City or e-mail ls_2bU@inquirer.com.ph or fax to 897-4793. Please have your answers in by 12 nn on Dec. 22.

JOSHUA Jackson, voted favorite male artist

McDonald's

NOT ONLY FOR KAREN. McDo is everyone's favorite fast-food.


Is that one ring or three?
A combination of steel and aluminum rings.

How wonderful! A bracelet made of silicon and individual steel blocks.

Play on reflections with this bracelet and ring made of polished steel.

A silicon necklace you can assemble and take apart any way you want.

swatch bijoux

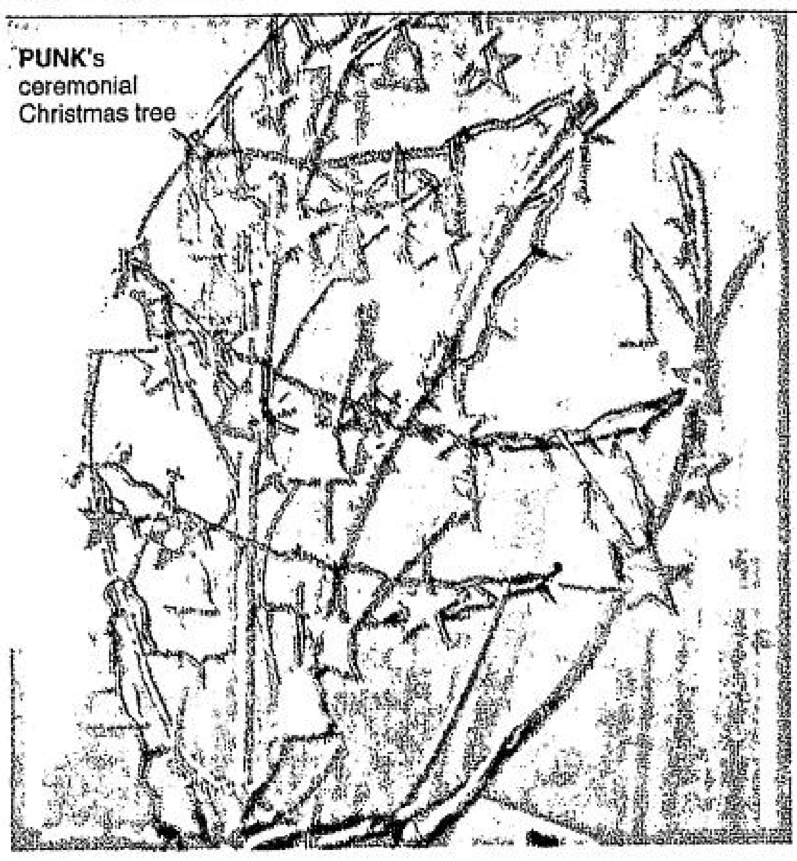
The first "body candy" offered by Swatch.
It comes in pastel colors.

The small steel spheres in this bracelet seem to float in the air!

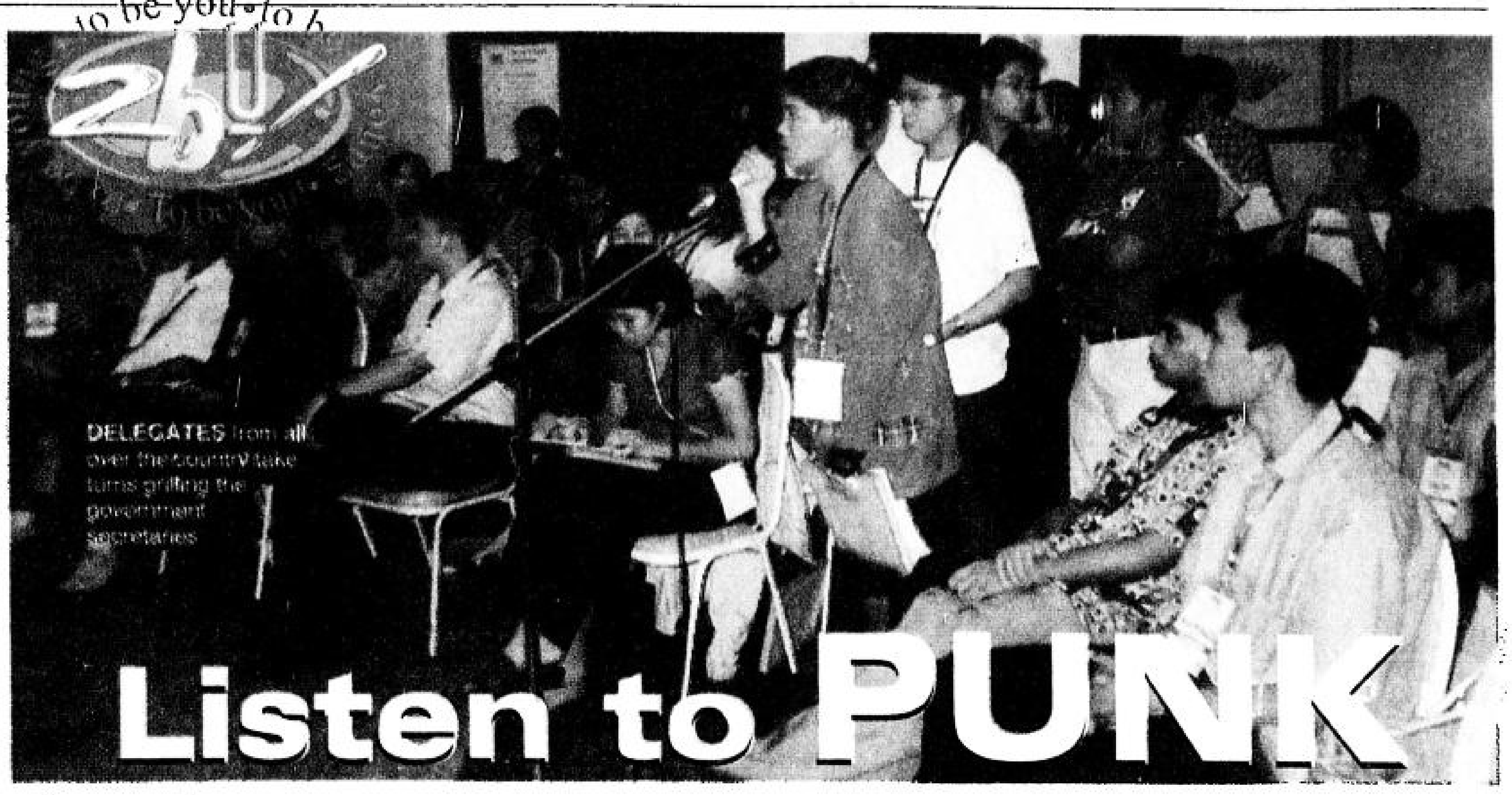
Brillantly colorful silicon, dramatically designed.

Silicon: the material which best adapts to unusual shapes and bright colors.

Swatch Bijoux is available at Swatch Store Megamall and Swatch Store Glorietta.



PUNK's ceremonial Christmas tree



to be you • to b
2bU!

DELEGATES from all over the country take turns grilling the government secretaries

Listen to PUNK

By Walter Ang

MAKING New Year's resolutions should be fairly easy if you know what problems to change or correct. Our nation's youth gave the government an early Christmas gift by listing down the problems that need attention, in hopes of our country's top guns making resolutions and taking action for the future that will benefit the youth.

A three-day summit entitled "The Pambansang Ugong ng Kabataan (Punk)" was held in Malate, Manila to discuss and list down issues facing the youth. The topics and problems discussed were then documented and presented to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for the government to study and consider in future policy-making.

The President had expressed her desire to consult with the youth to assess their concerns and needs, especially since they had a big part in Edsa 2. From this directive, the National Youth Consultative Task Force organized Punk.

Chaired by the Department of Social and Welfare Development and co-chaired by the Department of Interior and Local Government and the Department of Education, Culture and Sports, the task force began preparations in June of this year. Regional Youth Summits were held throughout the country, including the ARMM and CAR regions. Four representatives were then chosen from each region and sent to Manila to attend Punk.

Issues

The delegates represented four different sectors, namely, student youth, out-of-school youth, working youth and youth with special needs. Twenty-year-old Danilo Lumakid was one of the representative from Region 11 (Davao Oriental) and said, "We are very thankful for Punk because at last we have a venue where authorities can hear us voice out our problems." Under the youth with special needs group, he represented youth from indigenous tribes. The special needs group also includes youth with disabilities.

Delegate Albert Camay, from Region 6 (Negros Occidental), who represented out-of-school youth, observed that regardless of sector or region, the problems faced by the nation's youth were similar in nature and scope.

Issues discussed were grouped under three categories. In the Survival and Development category, the top five issues were education, employment, health, reproductive health and family problems. In the Participation category, the top four issues were government-related problems, the Sanggunian Kabataan, lack of active participation and lack of access to information. In the Protection category, the top seven issues were substance abuse, child abuse, child labor, children in conflict with the law, prostitution, fraternities/sororities/hazing and pre-marital sex.

What happened

The first two days of the summit were set for discussions amongst the delegates to deliver their concerns and suggested courses of action. The third day was a formal presentation to the President in Malacañang.

To open the summit, the delegates had a Christmas tree decorating ceremony where they wrote down their expectations and desired outcome from Punk on the ornaments. 2bU! visited the summit on its second day and spoke with a commissioner for the National Youth Commission (NYC), Paulo "Bam" Aquino. Familiar to early birds as one of the hosts of TV morning show "Breakfast," he said, "These delegates are really empowered. I was pleasantly surprised at how articulate they are in expressing their concerns."

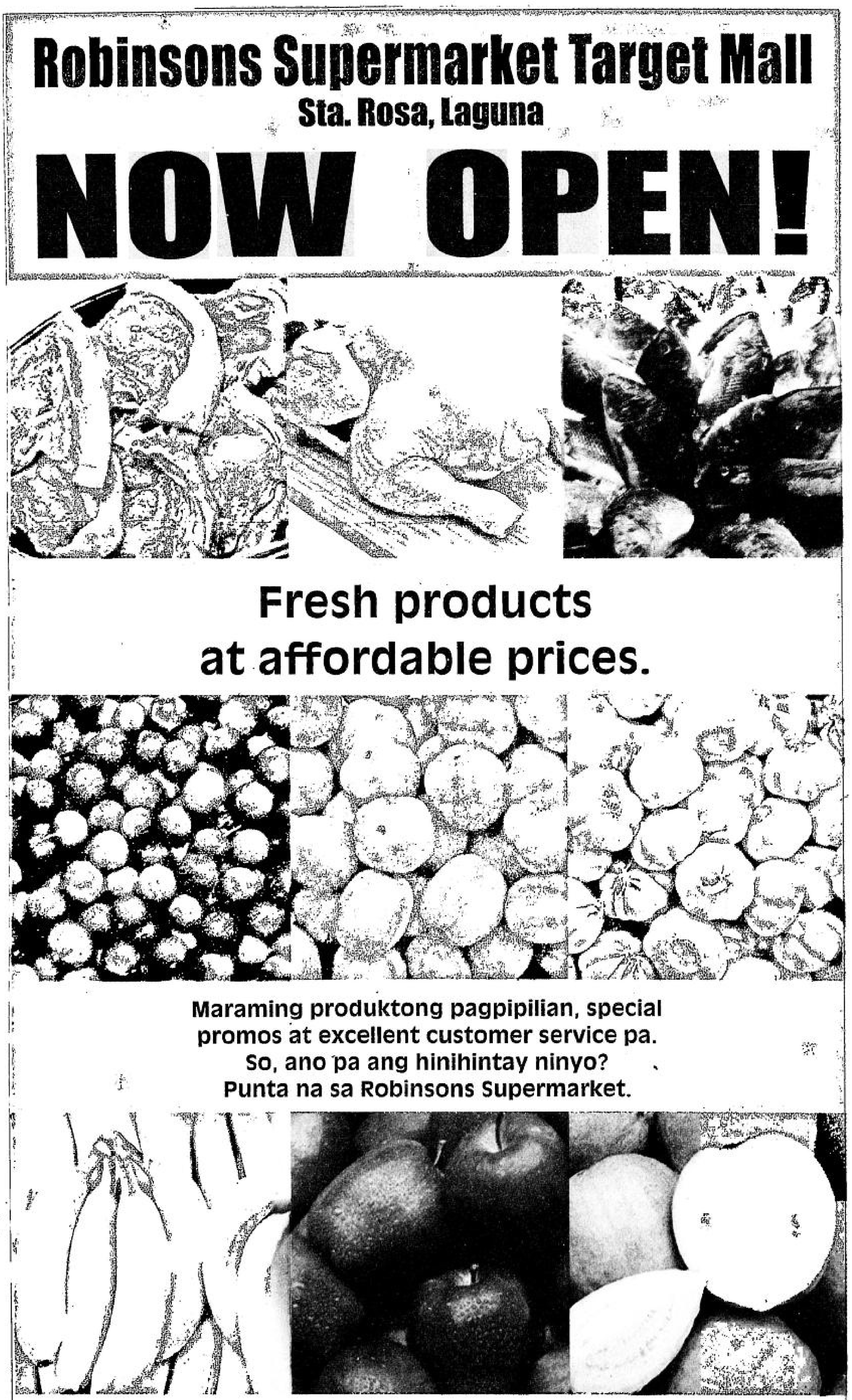
That day saw a surprise visit from Sen. Francisco "Kiko" Pangilinan who gave a pep talk to the delegates. The delegates also had an open forum with government officials. The delegates were able to express their concerns and receive feedback from Secretary Teresita Delz (National Anti-poverty Commission), Secretary Manuel Dayrit (DOH), Secretary Joey Lina (DILG), Secretary Mar Roxas (DTI) and Dinky Soliman (DSWD).

Secretary Raul Roco of DECS also gave a short speech for the delegates, encouraging them to steer away from "the beaten path" and take action against the problems they faced.

There are currently no plans to have another Punk summit but Bam Aquino said the NYC will monitor if the issues presented by the Punk will be given appropriate attention by the government. "This mixed group of delegates came from all sectors. Regardless of social standing and whether they came from the city or indigenous tribes, their coming together to help contribute to the country is the biggest thing Punk can give."

Call the National Youth Commission at 781-1613 local 110.

COMMISSIONER Paulo "Bam" Aquino of the National Youth Commission



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promos at excellent customer service pa.
So, ano pa ang hinihintay ninyo?
Punta na sa Robinsons Supermarket.

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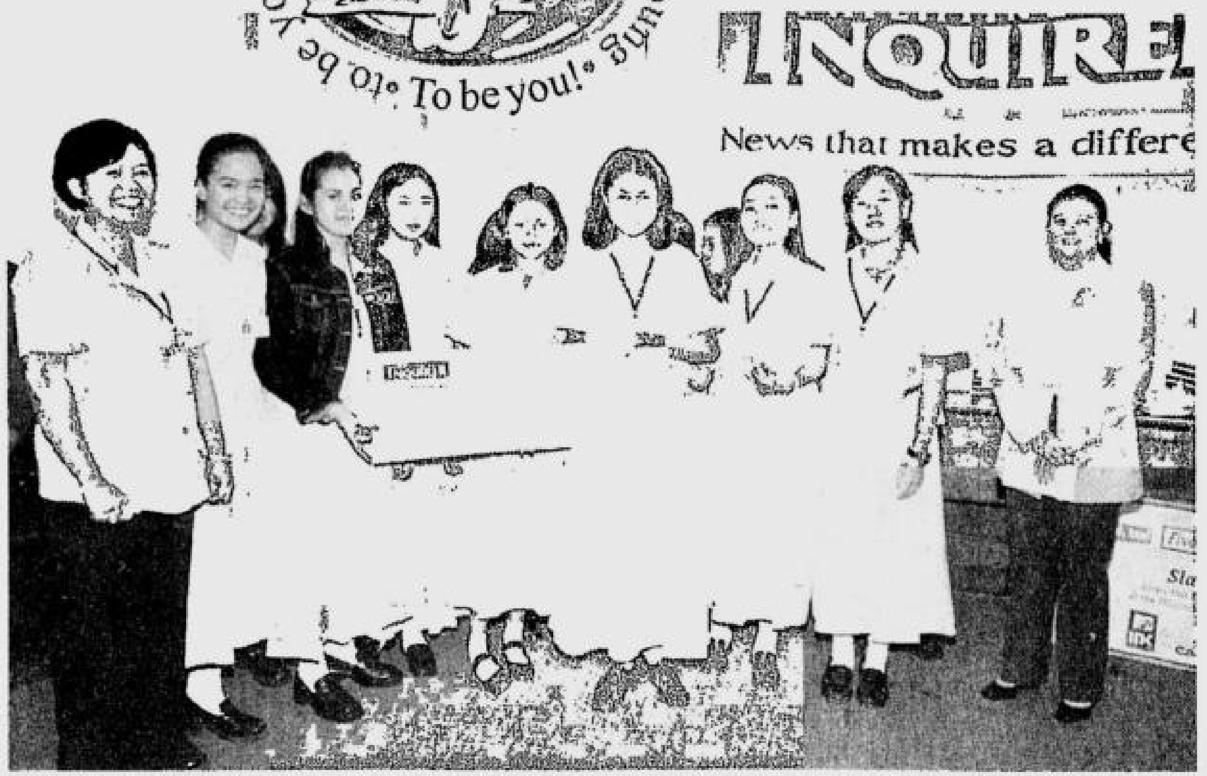
Target Mall, Sta. Rosa Commercial Complex, Balibago, Sta. Rosa, Laguna



POVEDA Learning Center is awarded by the PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, through president Alexandra Prieto-Romualdez, for Best Newspaper Reading Campaign.

PHOTOS: JOHNNY VILLENA

Best Reading Campaign
candy

PROPONENTS of the Teens Read, Too! campaign together with Miriam College, winner of this year's Best Reading Campaign. From left, Thor Balangan of Filipinas Heritage Library, Mabi Balangue of Adarna, Christine Fonacier of MTV, Alexandra Prieto-Romualdez and Celine Madamba from the INQUIRER, and Ani Rose Almario of Adarna.

Young readers celebrate reading

By CELINE MADAMBA

WHOEVER said that the youth of today don't read is mistaken.

In the recent Slam and Jam Competition held at Filipinas Heritage Library, some 60 students from 12 high schools reveled in excitement as they rapped their favorite literary verses from books and excerpts from articles of the PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER.

Passages from classics such as Percy Shelley's "To a Skylark," contemporary novels such as Helen Fielding's "Bridget Jones' Diary" and poems such as Jose Corazon de Jesus' "Pag-Ibig" were set to popular tunes and expressed through impassioned declamations and creatively choreographed dance numbers. Newspaper articles were also highlighted through witty performances addressing recent events such as the World Trade Center bombings, the Abu Sayyaf and People Power II.

As part of the Teens Read, Too! campaign spearheaded by Adarna House, Filipinas Heritage Library, Candy Magazine, MTV Ink and the INQUIRER, the Slam and Jam Competition aimed to encourage the youth to explore a variety of literary genres so that they could be inspired further to read.

According to MTV Ink editor in chief Christine Fonacier, "the biggest thing that the youth will get out of this campaign is greater awareness about what's out there."

Through awareness, the proponents of the program aim to give teens a choice in their reading materials, which in turn can nurture healthy reading habits. According to a 1999 study by Ateneo de Manila, declining youth readership in recent years is not a result of negative attitudes but rather a result of the youth's limited access to reading materials that interest them.

"By giving the youth access to newspapers, magazines and books," said Ani Rose Almario of Adarna Publishing House, "we hope to develop their reading habits and hope they get hooked."

Reading not only enriches the mind but also the imagination. According to Mia Fausto, Candy Magazine editor in chief, "it transports the young to places they've never been to, plus people who are well-read are often great conversationalists."

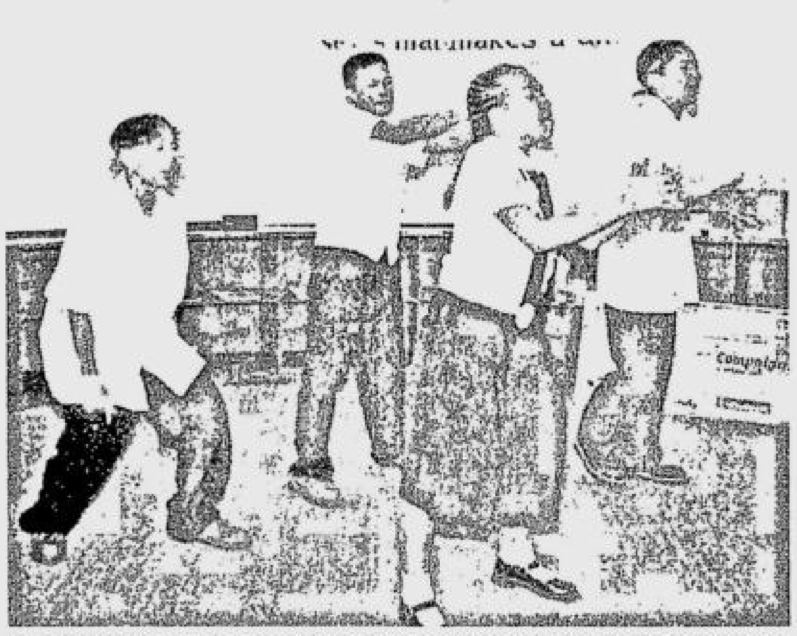
For this year's Slam and Jam Competition, Pateros National High School placed first, followed by La Salle Greenhills and Assumption San Lorenzo. The MTV Ink Attitude Award went to Pateros National High School and Assumption San Lorenzo and the Candy Slammer award went to Assumption San Lorenzo. A special INQUIRER award went to Pateros National High School for its dynamic interpretation of recent news.

Schools with established reading programs were also awarded. Miriam College bested 11 other schools with the Best Reading Campaign, while Poveda Learning Center received a special award from the INQUIRER for its newspaper reading program.

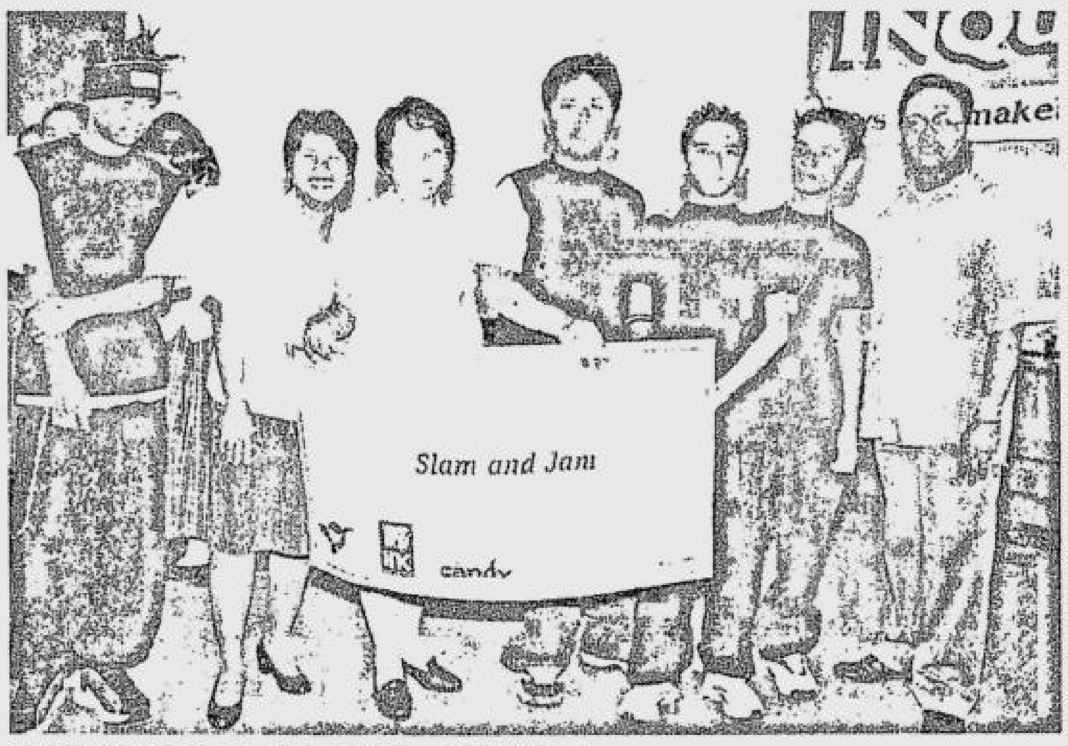
"We at the INQUIRER are pleased to have found partners who share our concern for reading," said INQUIRER president Alexandra Prieto-Romualdez. "Cultivating strong reading habits among the youth is important in developing the skills that are essential to their future."

High school students rap their favorite poems, stories and articles in the Slam and Jam Competition

THE AUTHOR (center) with the representatives from the 12 participating high schools of Teens Read, Too! All schools received free one-year subscription of the PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER.



SLAMMERS and Jammers from Pateros National High School perform a dynamic number regarding news from recent months—Taliban, WTC, Erap, Abu Sayyaf...issues discussed in the INQUIRER.



THE WINNING school—Pateros National High School

Road read for young people

By RAYA LOPEZ MARTIN
2bU! Correspondent, University of the Philippines College Baguio

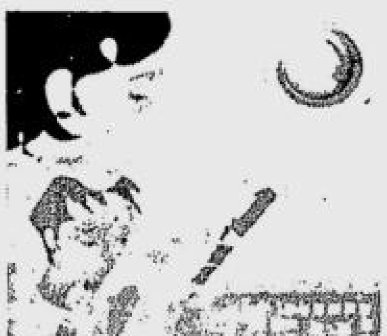
WE love to read, whether it's a serious novel or a poetry anthology, whether it's a laid-back teen magazine or netzine article. So why are the oldies upset? Is it because most of us haven't read "Moby Dick" or "Catcher in the Rye" outside of a class project? Or maybe because we refuse to even touch these "heavy-themed readings" unless they come with pictures? I can assure you, there's nothing wrong with our generation. We're just plain picky.

A few days before I was about to leave for Baguio, I received these seemingly dubious books. Before my sister could finish all of them, I packed the three cute pieces in my bag and hurried off to catch my trip. It turned out that these novellas were the latest winners of the Pilar Perez Medallion for Young Adult Literature, part of the reading campaign Teens Read, Too! Now on its second year, the campaign aims to discover brilliant new authors and introduce to the market a fresh batch of youth-oriented literature.

So, I picked the book with the funkiest cover first.

'Sup?'

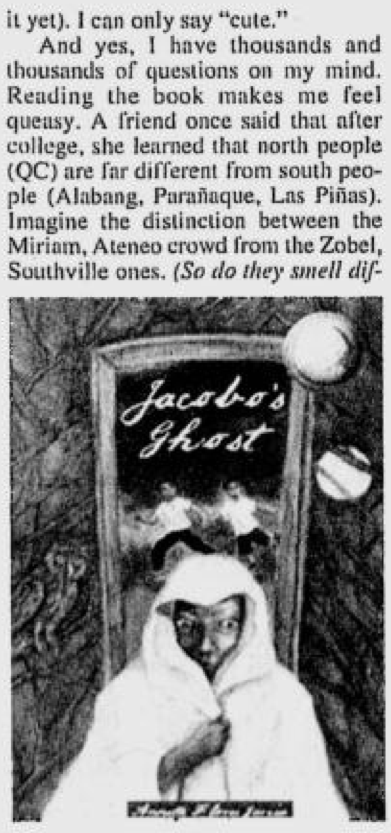
With illustrations by Paolo Lim, Maria L.M. Fres-Felix's "Sup?" is a cheery, exciting book about a 13-year-old girl who suddenly encounters a family crisis. Ram is an upper middle-class girl whose world revolves around high school, crushes, malling, texting and computers. Familiar? I'm supposed to fall in love with this book, but the first few chapters just left me baffled and uncomfortable.



"Sup?" is told from Ram's point of view, talking mostly about her *barkada* (Corky, Sushi, Mei-mei, Daphne), her hardcore crush on Jett who's in a band, and complaints about parents, Miss Dimapili and the cruel world she lives in (she is currently grounded). Growing up with a coed *barkada*, in the suburbs of BF, I'd love to think we share the same world. This book is full of our down-memory-lanes: Starbucks *tambay*, that ugly feeling when you're in the mall with friends and you're the only one not buying anything, and *kilig* texts. Yes, interspersed between these musings are text messages with graphics and actual numbers (though I haven't tried it yet). I can only say "cute."

Three Adarna House books make the case for youth reading fare

And yes, I have thousands and thousands of questions on my mind. Reading the book makes me feel queasy. A friend once said that after college, she learned that north people (QC) are far different from south people (Alabang, Parañaque, Las Piñas). Imagine the distinction between the Miriam, Ateneo crowd from the Zobel, Southville ones. *(So do they smell different? The north ones bath themselves in Calvin Klein Truth while the south ones use Issey Miyake for libation--Ed.).* I guess those from the north are tight, prim and proper.



"Sup?" is full of memories. Short in interesting and relevant observations, it's a light story best read during a hot lazy afternoon with an ice-cold lemonade.

Ram is full of enthusiasm and amusing *hirits* ("That malling means money?"). She's one of those charming, everyday characters like the SVH twins or Clarissa. Still, this book could have been updated a bit with references to scents like cK and Victoria's Secret or a language as flexible as today's. With slight turns in the story and not much thinking, "Sup?" is a light read.

'Jacobo's Ghost'

With an artistic and mysterious cover by Joanne de Leon, "Jacobo's Ghost" talks about 12-year-old Jacobo Silva and his first trip to the province. Author Annette Flores Garcia takes us to San Esteban in Ilocos for "a good two weeks of surf, sand and sea." I've previously been to Ilocos on a field trip and this book is a perfect revisiting companion. Garcia shines in her lovely narration of the colorful journey, noticing details such as sweaty carabaos, fire trees along the highway, an endless blue sky and that lovely, lovely watchtower.

Being prominent, Jacobo's grandmother, Lola Carmen, is respected by the community. Jacobo basks in this respectability and stumbles upon a town mystery. Across *lola*'s house is an abandoned house, which becomes intriguing after a boy mentions something to Jacobo. What follows is a dark, chilling revelation.

Rather than reveal the climactic parts, I suggest that it'd be more exciting to read the book. Heavily polished with rustic charm, "Jacobo's Ghost" is a breather for city-bred teens who are preoccupied with the monotonous night life. This book left me smiling inside the bus.

I wonder when my next visit to the province will be.

'Mga Ako'

The first time my brother handed me these books, I gladly picked the first two and left this one on the table. He chided me, "Is it because it's in Filipino?" Well, yes, kuya, I'm not really fond of them. Not that I'm judging the book by its cover. It still is exceptional, with edgy computer graphics by Jose Miguel Tejido.

Written in hip, fashionable Filipino, "Mga Ako" by Amalia Salamat is about the travails of Nico Magtanong who faces the crisis of teenhood. His journal-like entries are divided into seven "himselfs," each discussing his thoughts on family life (divorced parents), dreams (to Pisay or not to Pisay), and being a youngster extraordinaire (class top 10, sports lover and Web writer who earns 2,500 bucks a month). He uniquely narrates his circumstances through different personas such as Bernardo Carpio, a circus artist and a juggler, among others.

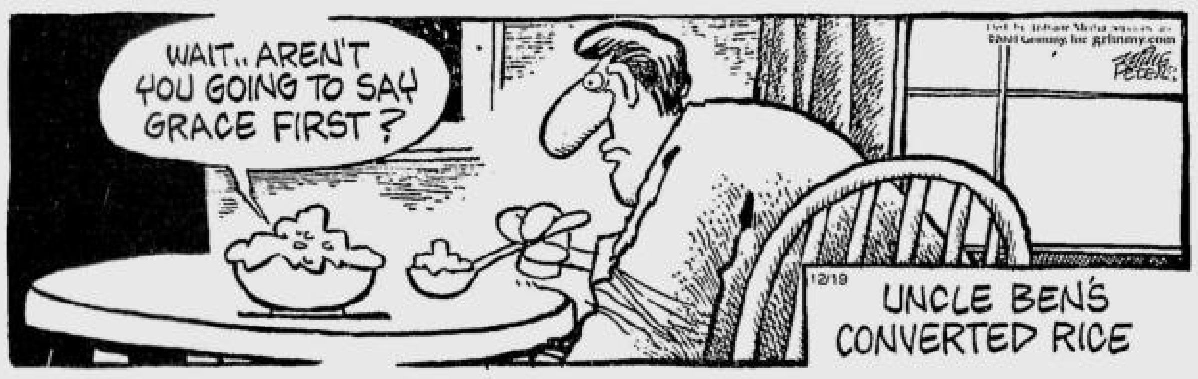
This book captures the rich, spirited life of today's teenager with witty (*"Talo ko pa raw si* Jaworski *sa pagbabantay"*), sincere (*"Sanay na 'ko,* theoretically, *na gumamit ng* condom"), and relevant remarks (*"Bakit masipag naman ang maraming tao pero mahirap pa rin?"*).

"Mga Ako" deals with situations that affect young people today: coping with divorced parents, tight schedules, choosing what school to go to, and simply figuring out how the bigger picture of life works. Nico relives the past and contemplates on his friends' conditions, evaluating his life without sounding snobbish or superficial as in other wannabe life-changing stories.

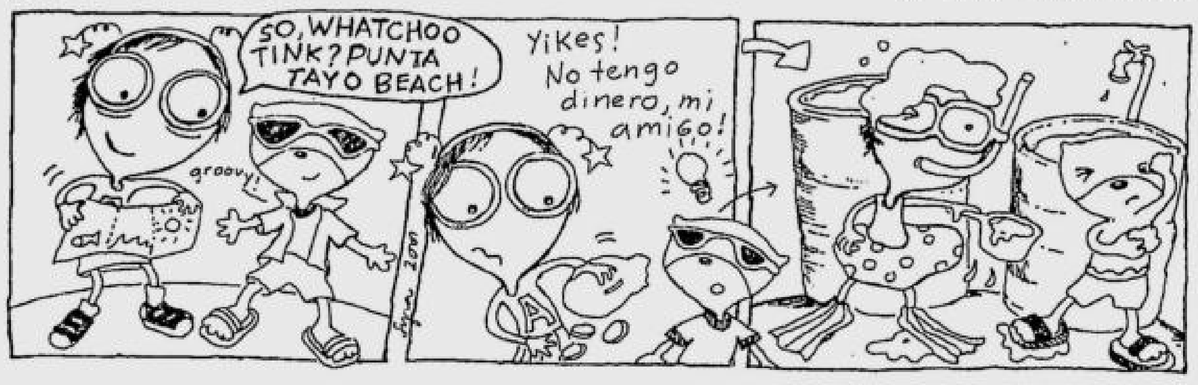
I guess we share at least a part, if not most, of Nico's experiences. "Mga Ako" doesn't end between the covers. Its story echoes even after.

"Sup?," "Jacobo's Ghost" and "Mga Ako" are published by Adarna House and Filipinas Heritage Library. Teens Read, Too! is a joint effort of Adarna House, Filipinas Heritage Library, Candy Magazine, MTV Ink, and the PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER.

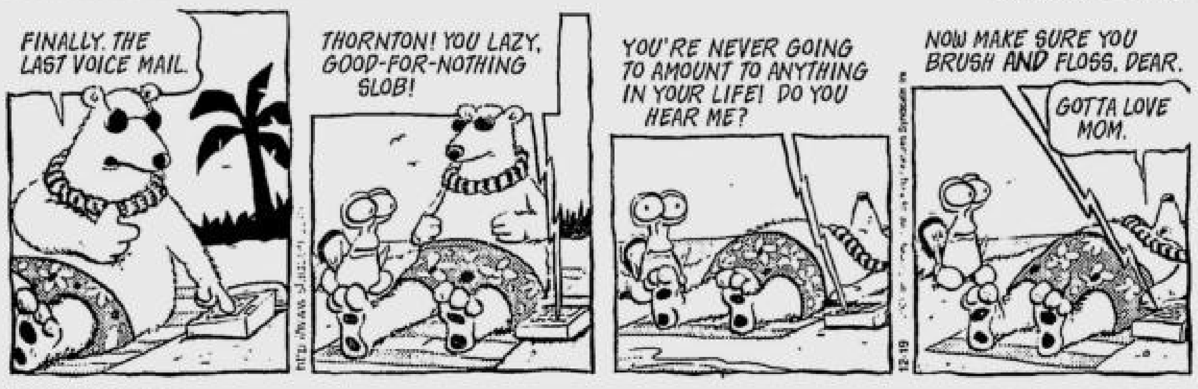
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM BY MIKE PETERS


WAIT.. AREN'T YOU GOING TO SAY GRACE FIRST?
12/19
UNCLE BEN'S CONVERTED RICE

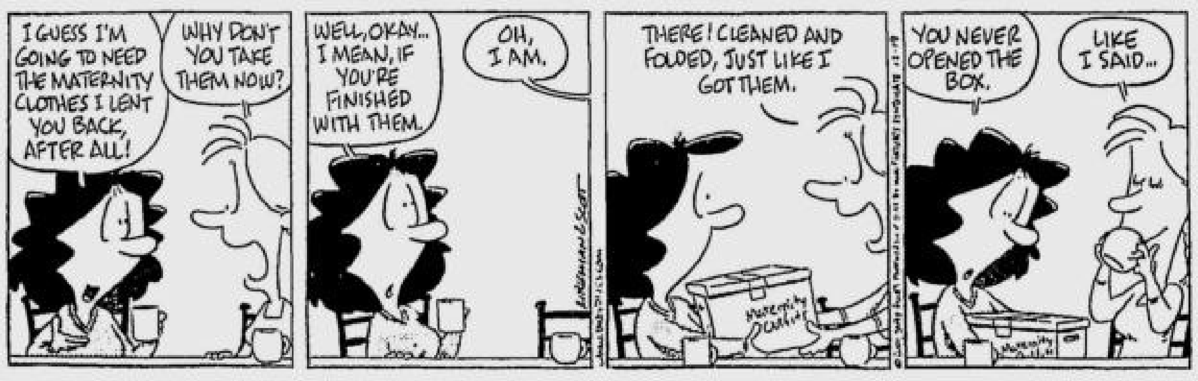
ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


SO, WHATCHOO TINK? PUNTA TAYO BEACH!
groovy!
Yikes! No tengo dinero, mi amigo!

SHERMAN'S LAGOON BY JIM TOOMEY


FINALLY. THE LAST VOICE MAIL.
THORNTON! YOU LAZY, GOOD-FOR-NOTHING SLOB!
YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO AMOUNT TO ANYTHING IN YOUR LIFE! DO YOU HEAR ME?
NOW MAKE SURE YOU BRUSH AND FLOSS, DEAR.
GOTTA LOVE MOM.
12-19

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


I GUESS I'M GOING TO NEED THE MATERNITY CLOTHES I LENT YOU BACK, AFTER ALL!
WHY DON'T YOU TAKE THEM NOW?
WELL, OKAY... I MEAN, IF YOU'RE FINISHED WITH THEM.
OH, I AM.
THERE! CLEANED AND FOLDED, JUST LIKE I GOT THEM.
YOU NEVER OPENED THE BOX.
LIKE I SAID...

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Tim Reid, Cicely Tyson, Robert Urich, David Susskind

Happy Birthday: Sudden changes can be expected this year and your ability to move with the times will be the deciding factor as to how well you'll do. Be confident but don't lose sight of the suggestions being made by those around you. Your numbers are 9, 13, 27, 32, 36, 44

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You can make some cash if you get involved in moneymaking opportunities. Someone you know who has experience will give you some valuable information if you ask.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You need to travel down new avenues meeting new people and discovering new things. Your thirst for knowledge will lead you into insightful conversations.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You may find it difficult to keep your feelings to yourself when dealing with a family member who may not be doing too well. Plan something special that will lift his or her spirits.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You may want to make some of your decorations or gifts for the festive season. The more you save this month the better you will do heading into the New Year.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Your desire to spruce up your living quarters will be admired. Your openness will enable you to get to the bottom of any problem that may have been bothering you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You will be in the mood for love. Romance is evident if you are quick to respond to the advances being made. You can expect to form lasting relationships.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Start taking better care of yourself by joining a gym or picking up a good book about balanced diets and exercise.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Don't just sit there; start making plans. Pleasurable activities should be on your agenda. Phone the people you enjoy spending time with and do something that you will all enjoy.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Past partners may get in touch with you just to see how you are. You may find him or her to be more mature.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): It's time to give back. Get involved with volunteer groups who help the needy. New relationships will unfold.

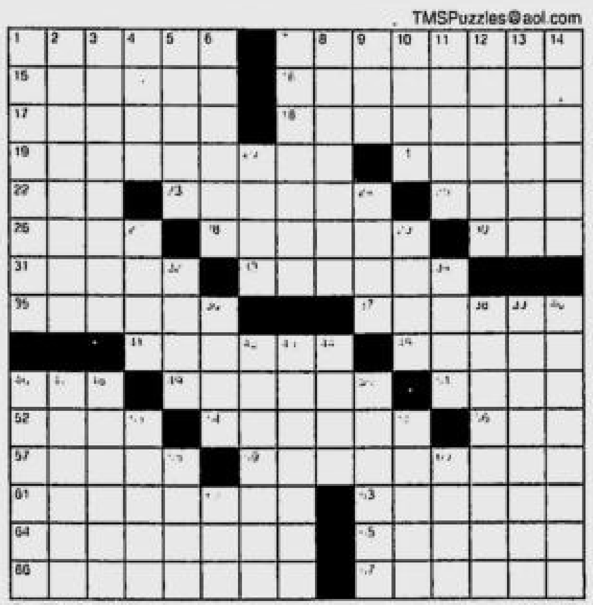
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You will feel much better about yourself and your future if you have been smart with your money. Be sure to drop by and see an older relative who may need some help.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): You will enjoy seeing some of the people you only get to see when there are holidays or family gatherings. You'll discover all sorts of interesting information.

Birthday Baby: You are spontaneous, a doer and ready to take on anyone and everything. You are strong, stable, determined to do your own thing and loving and loyal.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Matthew Higgins
Concord, NH
11/3/01

ACROSS
1 After-banquet event
7 G.I.'s dinner date?
15 Revolutionary Villa
16 Loss of hair
17 Greek letters
18 Dalai Lamas, and others
19 Relating to heat
21 Sand-trap club
22 Zeta-theta separator
23 Small, dark falcon
25 Cambodian monetary unit
26 Storage containers
28 Pasture grass
30 Blockhead
31 Anoint, old-style
33 Less difficult
35 Cash in
37 Input additional revisions
41 Talked to Lassie?
45 Destiny
46 __ jacet
49 More tranquil
51 Lacking firmness
52 Burden
54 City near Marco Island
56 Victory sign
57 Reveals
59 Ones who take liberties
61 Impala or gazelle
63 Self-centered person
64 Breathes
65 Breadwinner
66 Daters
67 Elegantly stylish

DOWN
1 Keyboard element
2 Primary Roman hill
3 Boarded an aircraft
4 Sonic boomerang
5 Appeal
6 Stockings merchant
7 "Waltzing __"
8 Draws forth
9 Kind of sister or story?
10 Eject violently
11 Verse rhythm
12 Evangeline's home
13 Slight degrees of color
14 Art supporters
20 Gratis
24 Black, in Burgundy
27 Unspecified number
29 Look furtively
32 Fair-hiring agcy.
34 Genuine
36 Vocalize pain
38 Outdoor movies
39 Engages deeply
40 Wall hanging
42 Free spirit of the 1920s
43 Female ruler
44 Editor's notation
46 College in Geneva, NY
47 Sillier
48 Respectful knee bend
50 Sow anew
53 Oozes
55 Beet yield
58 Long, narrow cut
60 Additional
62 Miner's product

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

S	T	A	B		S	T	O	O	D		A	C	H	E
L	A	M	E		H	E	L	L	O		D	O	O	R
A	X	O	N		E	L	I	A	N		S	M	U	G
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			F	O	E			S	E	L	M	A		
A	N	C	I	E	N	T	S		S	E	I	N	E	S
M	O	A	T		N	O	O	N		P	A	Y	N	E
A	N	N		R	E	T	R	A	C	T		B	E	D
H	E	N	C	E		F	E	R	O		S	U	R	E
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D	E	B		C	O	M	P	E	T	I	T	I	O	N
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L	Y	R	E		H	Y	P	E	S		R	A	N	D

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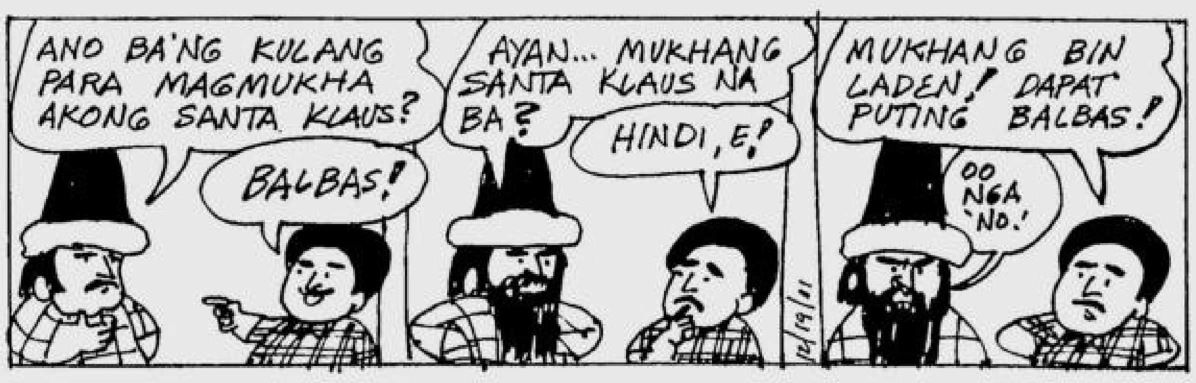
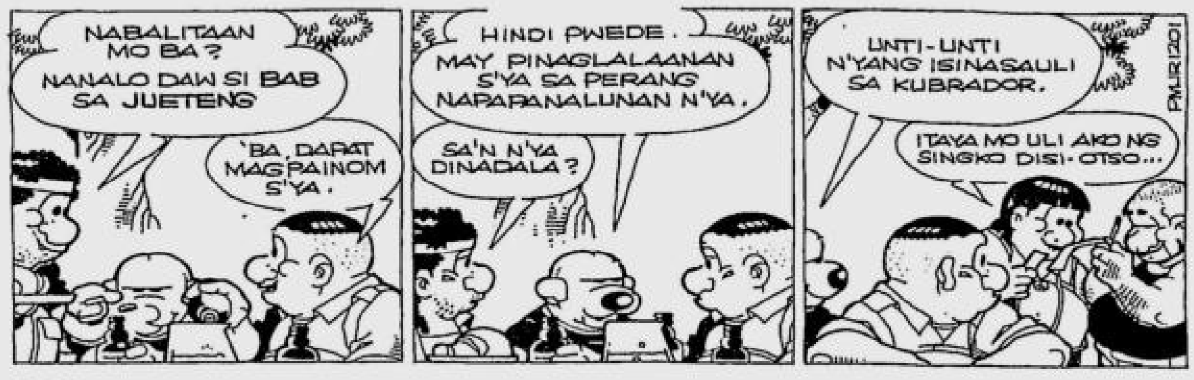
11/3/01

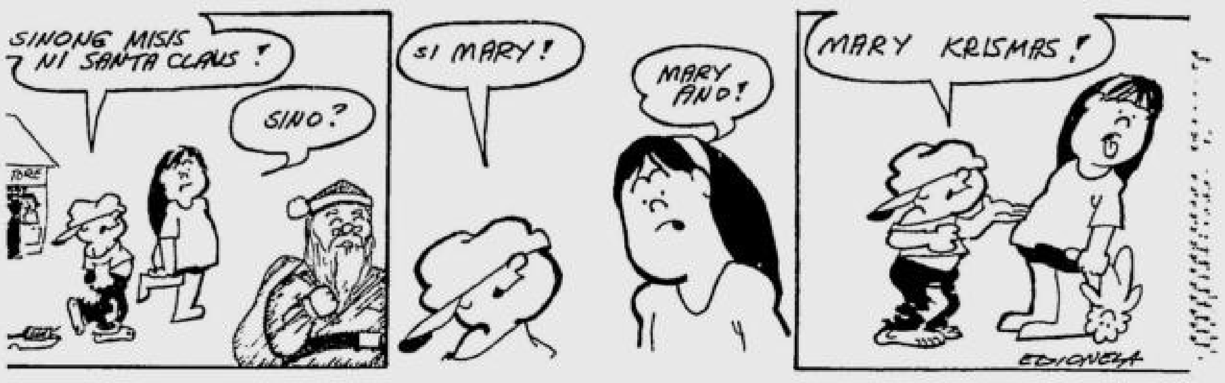
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


ANO BA'NG KULANG PARA MAGMUKHA AKONG SANTA KLAUS?
BALBAS!
AYAN... MUKHANG SANTA KLAUS NA BA?
HINDI, E!
12/19/01
MUKHANG BIN LADEN! DAPAT PUTING BALBAS!
OO NGA 'NO!

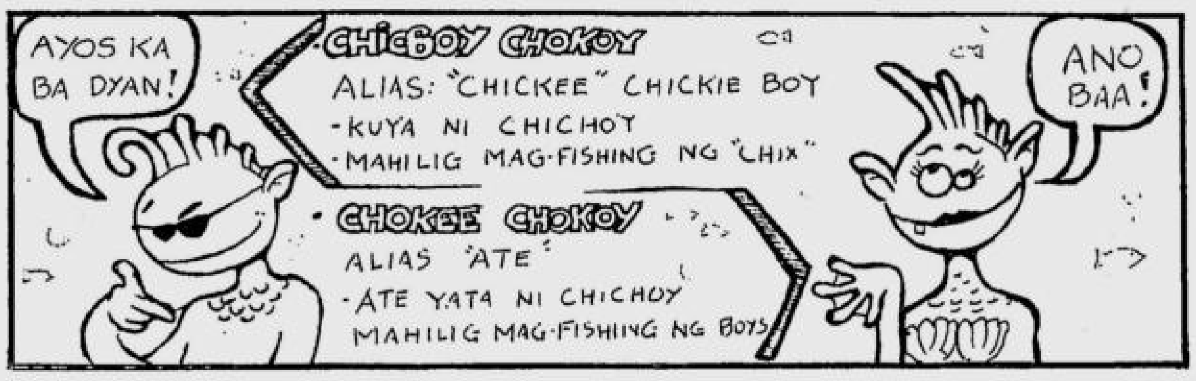
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


NABALITAAN MO BA? NANALO DAW SI BAB SA JUETENG
'BA, DAPAT MAGPAINOM S'YA.
HINDI PWEDE. MAY PINAGLALAANAN S'YA SA PERANG NAPAPANALUNAN N'YA.
SA'N N'YA DINADALA?
UNTI-UNTI N'YANG ISINASAULI SA KUBRADOR.
ITAYA MO ULI AKO NG SINGKO DISI-OTSO...
PMJR1201

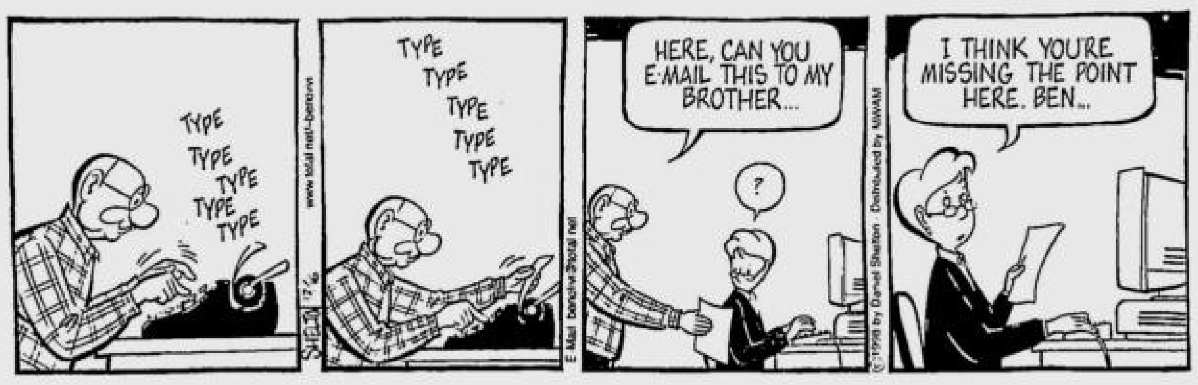
SIMO BY EDGAR DIONELA


SINONG MISIS NI SANTA CLAUS!
SINO?
SI MARY!
MARY ANO!
MARY KRISMAS!
EDIONELA

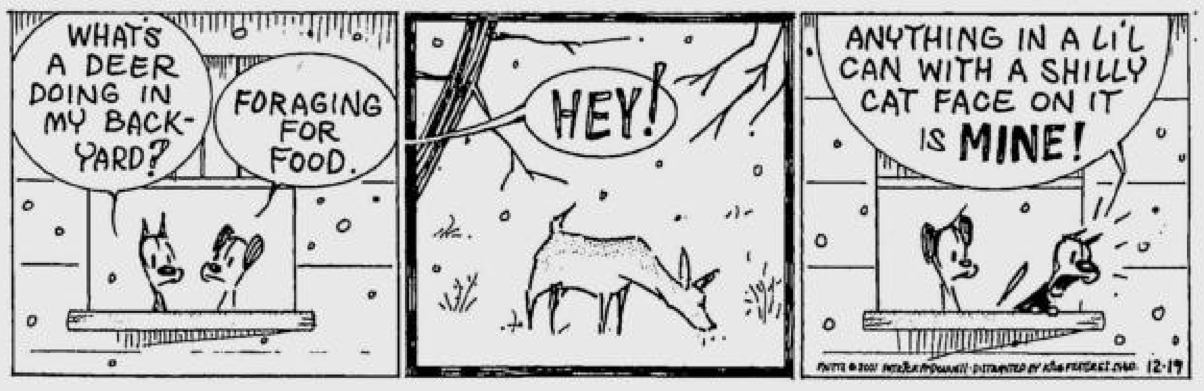
CHICHOY CHOKOY BY IKOY RICIO


AYOS KA BA DYAN!
CHICBOY CHOKOY
ALIAS: "CHICKEE" CHICKIE BOY
-KUYA NI CHICHOY
-MAHILIG MAG-FISHING NG "CHIX"
CHOKEE CHOKOY
ALIAS "ATE"
-ATE YATA NI CHICHOY
MAHILIG MAG-FISHING NG BOYS
ANO BAA!

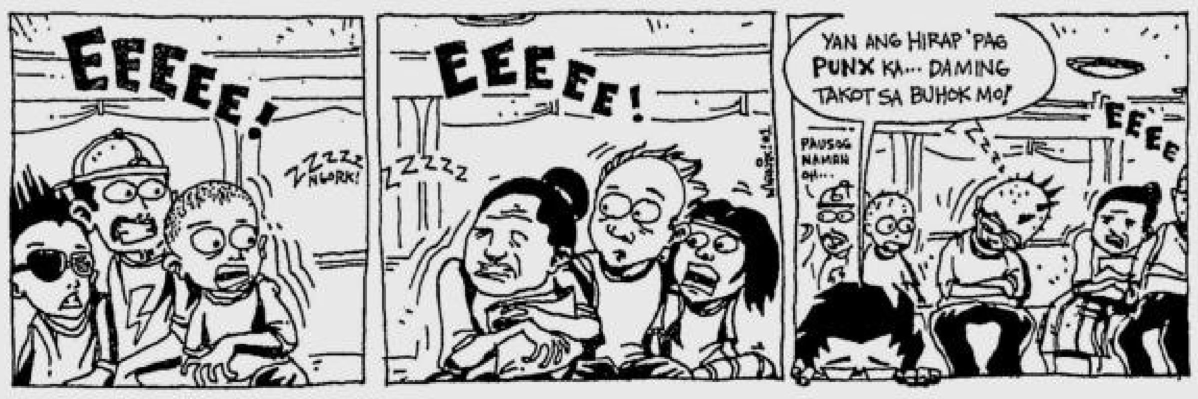
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


TYPE TYPE TYPE TYPE TYPE
TYPE TYPE TYPE TYPE TYPE
HERE, CAN YOU E-MAIL THIS TO MY BROTHER...
?
I THINK YOU'RE MISSING THE POINT HERE, BEN...

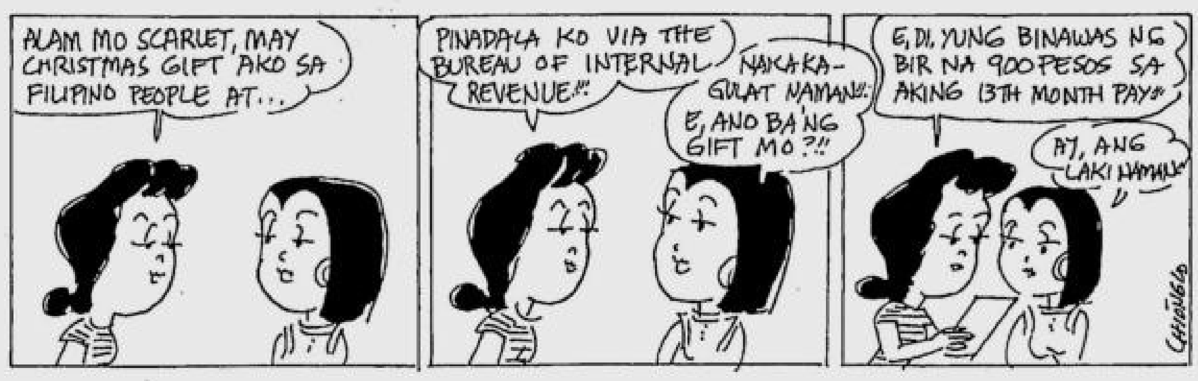
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WHAT'S A DEER DOING IN MY BACK-YARD?
FORAGING FOR FOOD.
HEY!
ANYTHING IN A LI'L CAN WITH A SHILLY CAT FACE ON IT IS MINE!
12-19

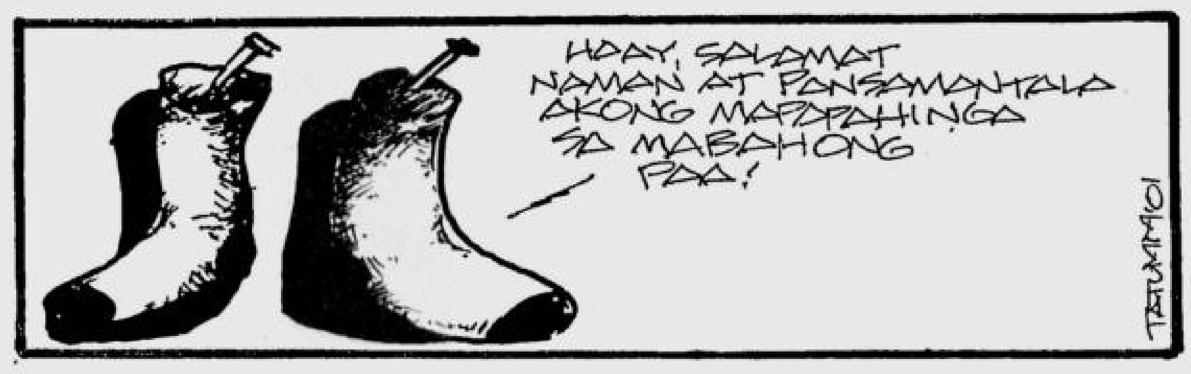
KIKO MACHINE BY MANUEL ABRERA


EEEEE!
ZZZZZ NGORK!
ZZZZZ
EEEEEE!
YAN ANG HIRAP 'PAG PUNX KA... DAMING TAKOT SA BUHOK MO!
PAUSOG NAMAN OH...
EEEE

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ALAM MO SCARLET, MAY CHRISTMAS GIFT AKO SA FILIPINO PEOPLE AT...
PINADALA KO VIA THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE!!
NAKAKA-GULAT NAMAN!! E, ANO BA'NG GIFT MO?!!
E, DI, YUNG BINAWAS NG BIR NA 900 PESOS SA AKING 13TH MONTH PAY!!
AY, ANG LAKI NAMAN!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING


HOAY, SALAMAT NAMAN AT PANSAMANTALA AKONG MAPAPAHINGA SA MABAHONG PAA!
TATUMMOI

Scents for beauty and relaxation

Kinny
Salas

THIS item first caught my attention because I was looking for great gift ideas for Christmas, house warming, wedding presents or simple décor for my room. As I studied the product, it turns out it has three purposes other than looking pretty. It annihilates bad odor, neutralizes the bad effects of chemicals and is used in aromatherapy for beauty and relaxation purposes. The last one, of course, got my attention the most.

The Catalytic Burner is made of glass and comes in two different sizes. It's pretty much a cross between the Bunsen burners we had in Science laboratory class and antique oil lamps. It is made in France and comes in numerous colors and designs enough to drive a girl crazy. What I like about it is that, unlike gel candles, it is in no danger of exploding because it disperses heat without naked flame from platinum-coated ceramic composite head. No fire hazard is a very good plus for me. The essential oil takes a long time to run out because one does not need to keep the burner lit for a long time for the scent to stay in the room and do its job of eliminating odors and whatever aromatherapy purpose the oil has. The price starts at P5,200 and goes up depending on how elaborate your design is.

This very pretty mechanism boasts of having great function as well. This aromatherapeutic treatment maintains good health, prevents the transmission of airborne viruses and bacteria, and it purifies the air by eliminating harmful-free radicals caused by cigarette smoke, haze, industrial emissions and harmful gases, pesticides/insecticides, toxic chemicals produced by paints, varnish and food, disinfects and eliminates unpleasant odors, nicotine, dust mites and mildew.

I witnessed the demo for bad odors from food and insecticides and I can vouch that within 20 minutes the odor is covered up. There are 18 essential oils available but I will concentrate on scents with supposed beauty functions.

ILLUSTRATION: JED ESTRADA

Ginseng—boosts energy; improves vitality, blood circulation, metabolism and longevity; regulates the arteries and vein system; enhances memory and brain function.

Muguet des bois—induces sleep; relieves tension; and improves mood and concentration.

Rose rouge—normalizes hormonal imbalances; improves metabolism and blood circulation; relieves skin-related problems and tension; serves as an aphrodisiac and creates a romantic and erotic ambience.

Fleur de lotus—reduces heatiness; calms anxiety; promotes youthfulness, vitality and concentration; improves spleen and kidney function; and strengthens internal organs.

Green ten—prevents cell mutation and cancer; promotes weight loss; aids fatty acid decomposition; lowers cholesterol and blood sugar level; improves blood circulation; stabilizes blood pressure; improves liver function; helps in phlegm removal; anti-ageing.

Bois de santal—relieves tension and improves circulation; relieves coughing; lowers blood sugar level; creates a better "qi" for better spiritual well-being and meditative focus according to feng shui, brings luck and prosperity.

Hinoki—repels insects; relieves rheumatism; improves respiratory system; reduces stress and improves vitality; creates a natural fresh ambience.

Citronelle—clears nasal congestion; relieves insomnia, snoring, migraine and tension.

Green bambopo—replenishes calcium for strengthening bones and protecting bone membrance; prevents osteoporosis; enhances skin moisture, elasticity and sheen.

Smoke cleaner—Disintegrates and eliminates nicotine (second-hand smoke), cooking oil and other fumes.

Call Charina at 0917-8352665.

WHITE crochet sweatshirt from the Donna collection

Achieve different looks for different occasions

MAKE a fashion statement this season with Sisley's newest collection. Rotating around clear focal points such as elegance, color, sophistication and metropolitan look, the newest collection offers Sisley patrons the chance to wear different looks in different occasions round the clock.

The holiday collection consists of comfortable silhouettes and shapes influenced by the '80s image. Many mock, crew- and V-necks shape the wool and jersey in more basic items, while the more fashionable look is given wider and bigger necks that remind the shawl type, with feminine shapes and various sleeve lengths. The polo shape, the scarf-styled necks or the stitched details on jersey collars are also new inputs, which cater to the more elegant and feminine customer.

The trousers are very simple and easy to match through several lengths and shapes: straight, wide, ankle length, long and cuffed. Most of the lower waist trousers have a stronger construction on the waistline in order to allow a wider customer segment. Skirts and dresses are mostly in very feminine fabrics (satin, crêpe, light tweed) and shapes (shaped on the waist, with low V-neck and sleeveless).

Colors of Sisley vary from camel with accents of chocolate brown, orange and chili red to burgundy, wine and antique pink.

Visit Sisley at Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Cinderella Glorietta 3, Cinderella Alabang Town Center, Cinderella Greenbelt and Cinderella SM Megamall.

WHITE mock turtle neck with black suit from Sisley

Chic and trendy

BABO, a line of young trendy clothing, makes waves in fashion retail. Located at 3/L Glorietta 2 and Rockwell Power Plant, it is ultra-trendy and in-step with the current goings-on in the fashion capitals.

There is an abundance of Union Jack flag prints in tops and bags and other accessories such as belts and wristbands. And since red is the color of the season, there are plenty of sporty red tops and slim pants.

Denim continues to be explored by the international fashion scene's top designers. Babo will have plenty of denim as well, in dark and vintage hues that are funky, practical and comfortable. And since the current fads are brimming with details, Babo's separates are filled with chic ornaments such as studs, metals and embroideries.

Babo is geared for the young individualist. It nurtures the independent spirit of today's youth. They do not want to be dictated upon, they want action; they choose independently, they want to be free. The name alone, according to numerology, makes one a quick thinker philosophically and creatively; they desire to be free from monotony. Which is what the young fashion enthusiast can expect when they visit this little shop of fashion.

Babo bags and accessories store is now open at 3/L Glorietta 2, 2/L PowerPlant Mall, Rockwell Center and Greenhills Theater Mall.

Fusion of comfort and style

SADDLE up with Esprit this season, a perfect blend of cowgirl fun and rhinestones, a mixture of fashion and style.

Your Christmas wish list will go a long way with blouses in new sleeves shape; corduroy tops known as the good winter fabric; jackets with fashioned fur collars; blouses with rhinestones and basic tees with fashion images.

Colors are also extra rich and fabulous in time for the big celebration like pale leaf (smoke blue to misty blue), flint (cranberry to rose), nutmeg (rose to cream), wintermoss (northern green to cream/white), tundra (artic rose), iron gray and the basic black and white.

The Esprit holiday collection combines comfort and style and features designs in exquisite fabrics. Colors are dramatic, giving the casual wear a hint of elegance.

For every purchase of P5,000, get a free Esprit tote bag. Visit any of the Esprit outlets and Cinderella stores in Metro Manila and Cebu.

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Little Ashbee®
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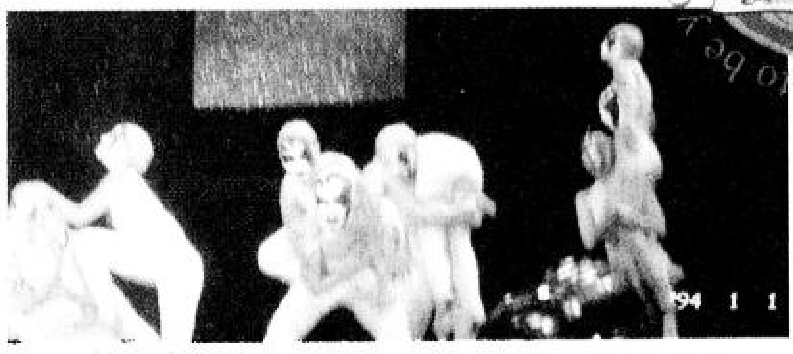
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3258 Series of 2001

UP Streetdance



ADMU CADS Jazz

DON Bosco Mandaluyong's Danz Troupe

Dancers celebrate freedom

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY JASON DOPLITO
2bU! Correspondent

DANCELEBRATION made the first day of December a red-letter day for various schools' dance organizations.

Twelve colleges/universities competed for the honor of having the best dance group. They were asked to interpret "freedom" in the way they understood it, which proved to be a challenging task. The event may not yet be as prestigious as the University Athletic Association of the Philippines competitions, but definitely the cheers from the schools' supporters were just as deafening. For a moment, I thought of giving up my note-taking and join the cheering and shouting. The energy of the schools was highly infectious that you would actually consider taking up dance classes just to know how it feels to be Christopher Walken (Weapon of Choice).

The De La Salle University's (DLSU) La Salle Dance Troupe, the organizer of this annual event, should be commended for doing it for 15 years. In terms of intensity and competition, there has been a great improvement this year compared to last year. The troupe opened the show and set the tone for what was going to be an enjoyable evening.

> Dancelebration may not yet be as prestigious as the UAAP competitions, but participants are just as competitive

The all-male group DLSU Boötes came next wearing straight jackets. They looked crazy enough to me. Proof? They posted the last seven digits of their cell phone numbers across their shirt (that should attract a handful of wackos in turn). But the group's stunts were good, with decent acrobatic turns.

A puzzler

Other all-male groups included the CEU ABSP dance troupe (Centro Escolar University) and the DBTC Danz Troupe (Don Bosco Technical College). DBTC danced to a remix of Michael Jackson's "Earth Song" and "They Don't Really Care About Us." It was actually a good group but in the first few minutes, a performer who was supposed to project a look of despair when the spotlight shone on him, had a funny face, like he was about to laugh. But the highly energized group was well synchronized and had good choreography.

FIRST prizewinner SSC Danz Edge

I had a problem with CEU's performance at first. The guys were onstage in military pants and shooting at each other. All throughout, you see them having fits of seizure, signifying being hit by bullets. I thought it had entirely nothing to do with the "freedom" theme, until I realized that their performance actually posed a very important question: Do we have too much freedom on our hands that we are capable of taking other people's lives? After the show, I heard that the troupe apologized to the organizers because they did not know there was a theme. So much for my interpretation.

Students of the University of Santo Tomas (UST) are well known for their theatrical and artistic talents and so expectations were high for the two groups representing the school—UST CAFA Dance Troupe and Phyt & Tempo. Sadly, however, the groups failed to live up to expectations. Their performances were not exactly fresh and unique. Phyt & Tempo fared better and just might catch up with the others next year.

Meanwhile, the College of Saint Benilde's (CSB) Footworks Dance Theater proved once again their superior skills in dancing and choreography. They opened their performance with a dream-like sequence—a man who's a slave to his work was shown bound to an office chair. Then, a muse hovered over him drifting through a white large cloth, underneath which were the other dancers. Later, they all transformed from boring adults to people who know how to have a good time. The number, set to Irish music, was well received.

Theatrical

The two all-girl groups, the AC Danz Move (Assumption College) and the SSC Danze Edge (St. Scholastica's College of Manila), were my favorites. Their numbers were very theatrical. I suspected that AC's performance was Afghanistan-inspired because of the all-black costume, including veils that covered the dancers' faces. Soon, the group was joined by the "freedom fairies" who danced alongside the "Afghan" women. They all joined a dance of liberation. Toward the end, the dancers released white doves, universal symbol of peace.

SSC's number was hauntingly beautiful and I just have to say—erotic, although I am quite certain that was not intentional. The performers, all handcuffed with lace covering their eyes, were hard to miss. Dancing to Natalie Imbruglia's "Smoke," they demonstrated discipline in the economy of movement. But it was one intense performance.

Like UST, Ateneo de Manila University (AdMU) and the University of the Philippines (UP) had two representatives each. Last year's champion, AdMU CADS Jazz, still proved to be the dance group to beat with its almost-perfect synchronicity and precise calisthenics movement. The dancers probably also had the best makeup among the contestants with white and blue, Venetian-inspired, painted masks. Likewise, the AdMU CADS Street fared well. Its number underscored the importance of good choreography and graceful, flawless routine.

UP Filipiniana, another highly regarded dance group, stuck to the basics and showed everyone that body movement was almost like a science itself. Stripped off of props and unnecessary embellishments, the performers' strong jumps and kicks were almost ballet-like. Combined with the harmony of the group, the dancers' movements were a standout by themselves. Another UP-based group, Streetdance, was a crowd favorite. Dressed in industrial-techno look, it opened its number in a unique way—with the dancers' feet up in the air as they did formations for about a minute. Certainly, they didn't disappoint their supporters with their performance.

In the end, it was SSC Danze Edge that grabbed the top prize, with CSB Footworks and UP Filipiniana placing second and third, respectively. Despite the delay in the start of the show and the hosts getting on your nerves, it was still all worth it.

STOP MURO-AMI FISHING
NO TRAWLING SCHOOL ZONE
NO CATCH FOR THE DAY
STAY OUT!
CYANIDE IS HOMICIDE
NO TRAWLING
ALL WE ARE SAYING IS GIVE FISH A CHANCE
TRAWLING NOT ALLOWED HERE!
NO TO BLAST FISHING
DO NOT ABUSE FISH RESOURCES
NO TRAWLING HERE
BLAST FISHING IS A THING OF THE PAST!
NO TO DYNAMITE FISHING
KEEP OUT!
NO TRAWLING: SCHOOL ZONE
STOP OVERFISHING.
NO TO BLAST FISHING
WE NEED MORE PATROL BOATS.
DOWN WITH CYANIDE FISHING
FISH HAVE RIGHTS!
STOP CYANIDE FISHING
SUPPORT US!
WWF

FISH RALLY. A massive protest action is being held in Philippine waters against the harm caused by illegal and destructive fishing practices. The organisers need your support. Donate to WWF now by calling 433 3222.

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Christmas 2001

for Her

Holiday gifting solutions from H&B, Ladies' Wear, Accessories, Shoes, Bags, and Philippine Crafts Departments

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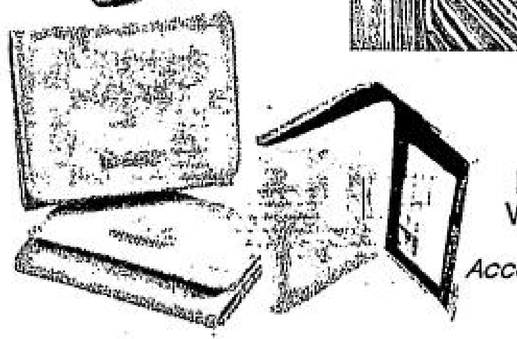
Zippered Long-Sleeve Blouse with Matching Striped Skirt *Ladies' Wear*

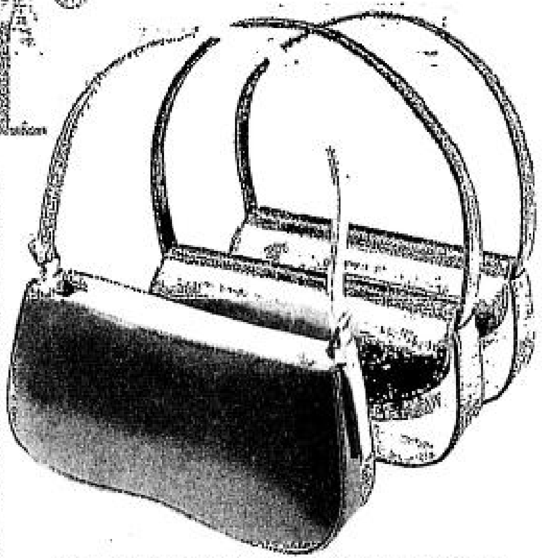
Jean Paul Gaultier Classique Christmas Tree Gift Set *H&B*

Figlia Slip-ons *Ladies' Shoes*

Striped Blouse with 3/4 Sleeves *Ladies' Wear*

Revlon Animal Instinct Collection *H&B*


Fabric Wallets *Ladies' Accessories*


Two-tone Structured Handbags

Figlia Mules *Ladies' Shoes*

Eye Channel Fashion Shades *Ladies' Accessories*

Janeo Sandals *Ladies' Shoes*

Striped Blouse and Skirt Ensemble *Ladies' Wear*

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Italina Necklace & Earrings Set *Ladies' Accessories*

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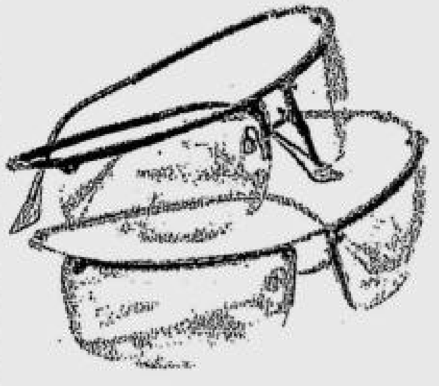
gift solutions

Christmas 2001



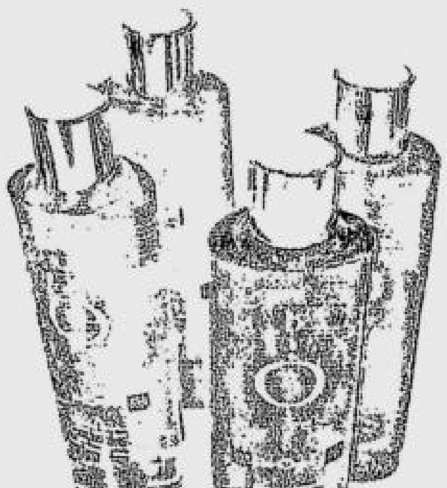
Eye Channel Fashion Shades *Ladies' Accessories*

Maupassant Necklace and Bracelet *Ladies' Accessories*

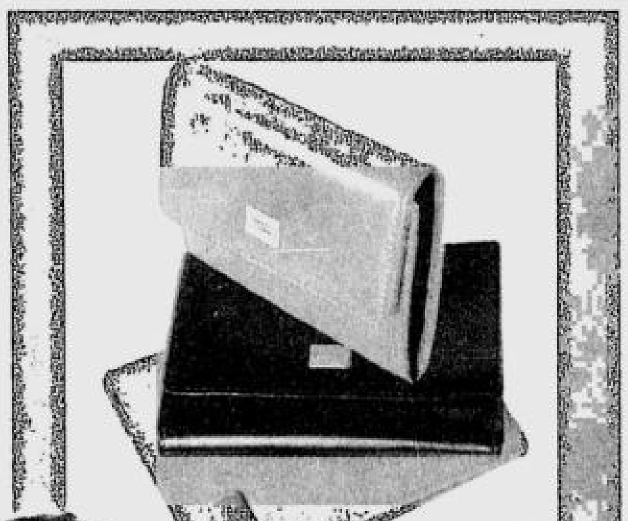
Klad with Gold and Silver Jewelry *Ladies' Accessories*

Fashion Jewelry *Ladies' Accessories*

Pacific Blue Shades *Ladies' Accessories*



Bioxs Shower Gel, Body Mist, Bath Elixir *H&B*



Wallets *Ladies' Accessories*

Tropical Pacifica Hair & Body Care *H&B*

Pierre Cardin Hankie Gift Set *Ladies' Accessories*

Fabric Shoulder Bags with stripes

Janeo Mules *Ladies' Shoes*

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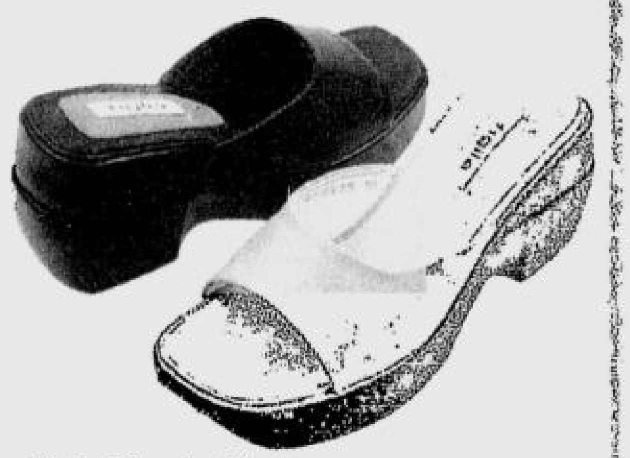
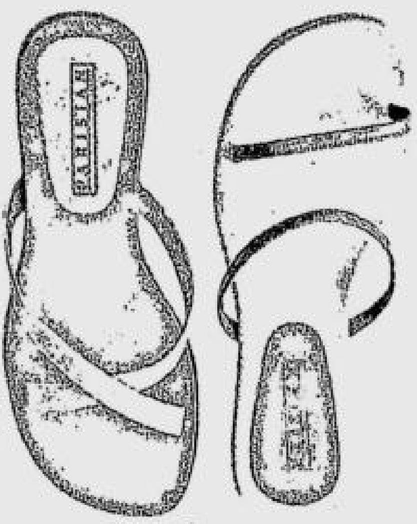
Jute Totes *Philippine Crafts*

Village Naturals Mineral Bath Soaks *H&B*

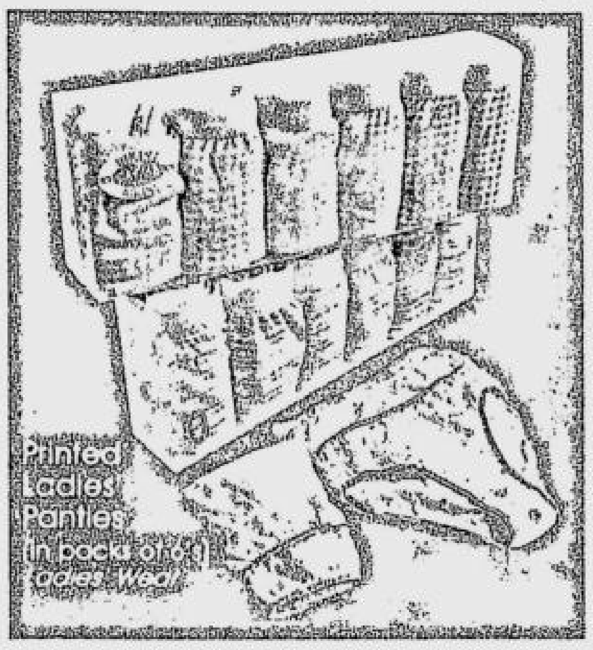


Figlia Chunky Wedge *Ladies' Shoes*

Village Naturals Bubble Bath *H&B*



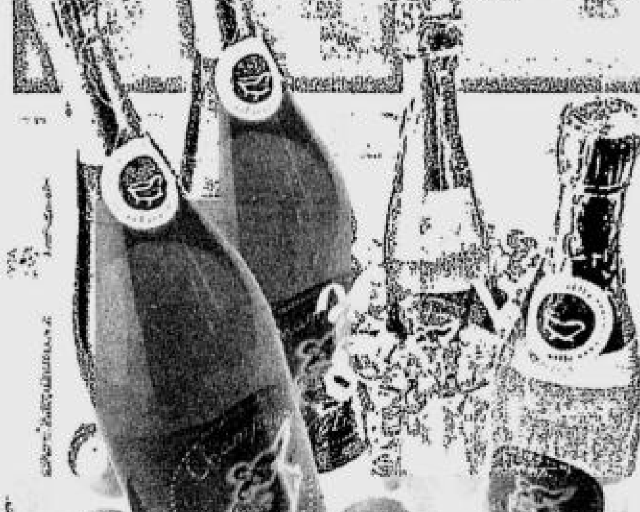
Step-ins *Ladies' Shoes*



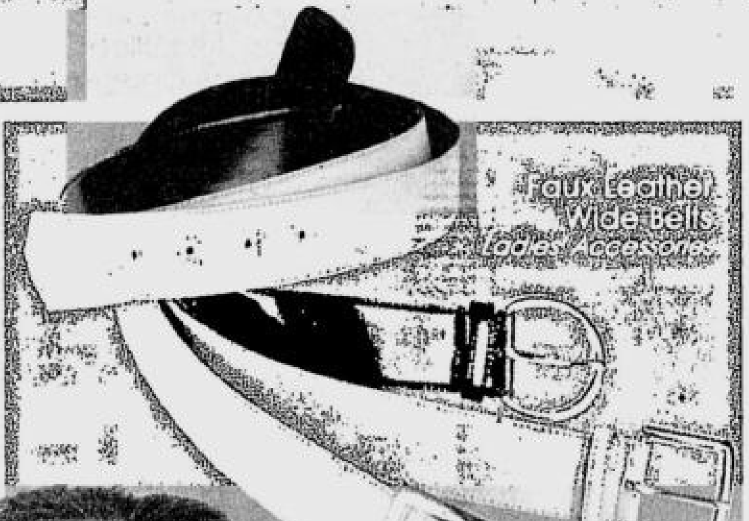
Printed Ladies Panties (in pack of 3) *Ladies' Wear*

Jute Handbags with Wooden Handles *Philippine Crafts*

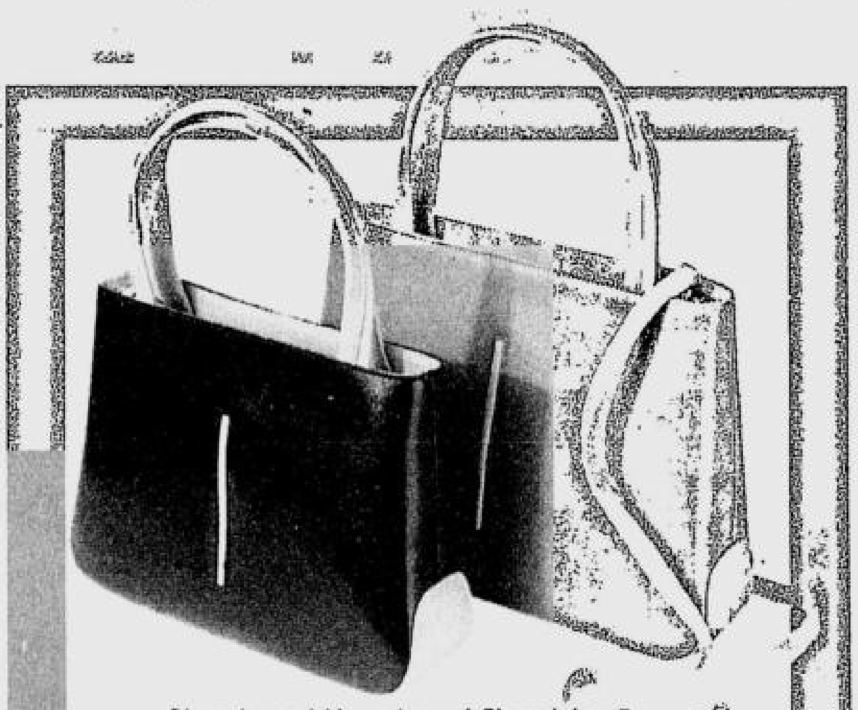
Fabulous wardrobe and personal care solutions to holiday dressing.



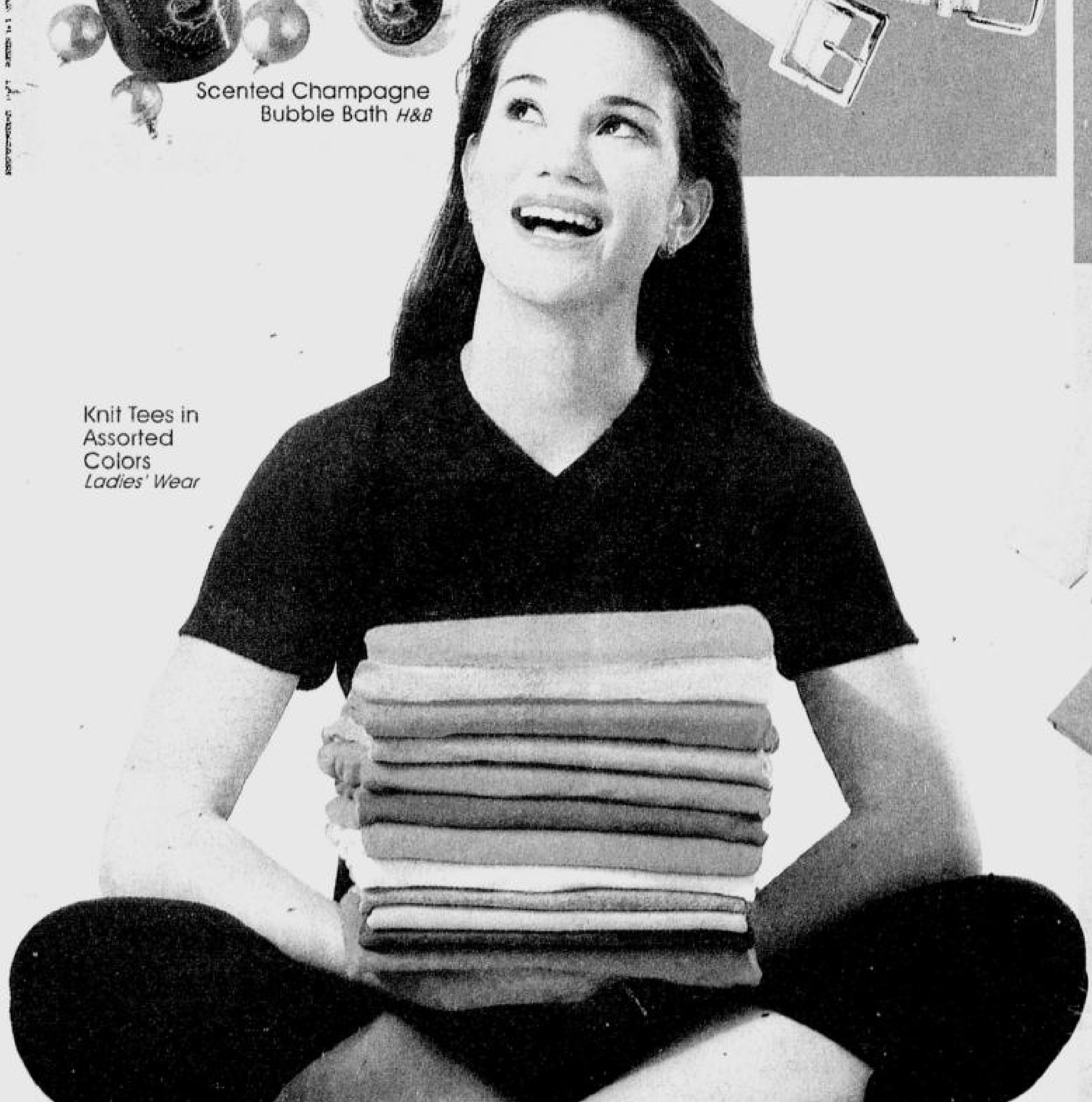
Scented Champagne Bubble Bath *H&B*



Faux Leather Wide Belts *Ladies' Accessories*

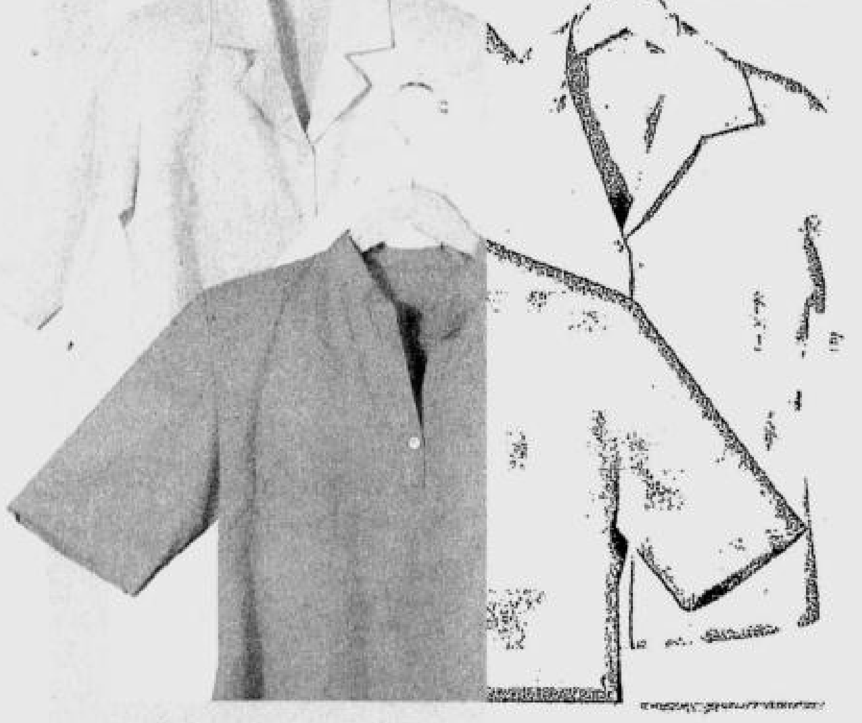


Structured Hand and Shoulder Bags



Knit Tees in Assorted Colors *Ladies' Wear*

Linen Blouses in Solid Colors *Ladies' Wear*



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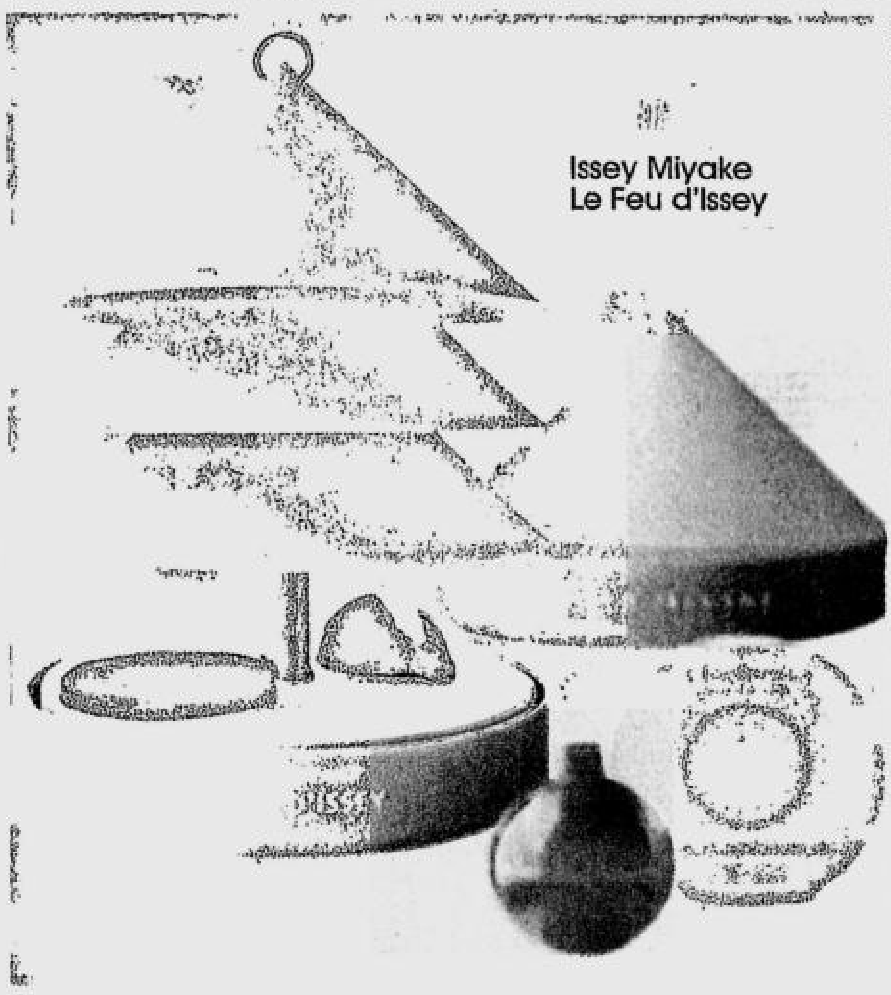
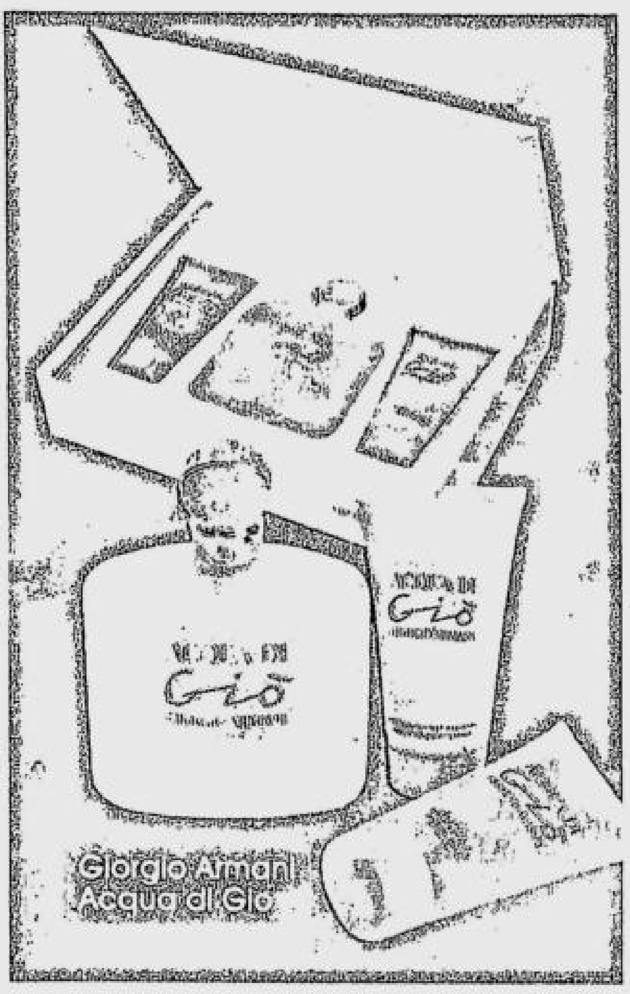
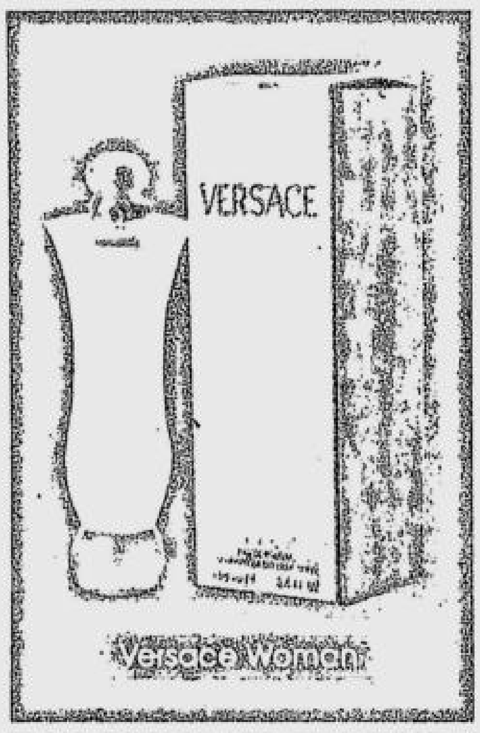
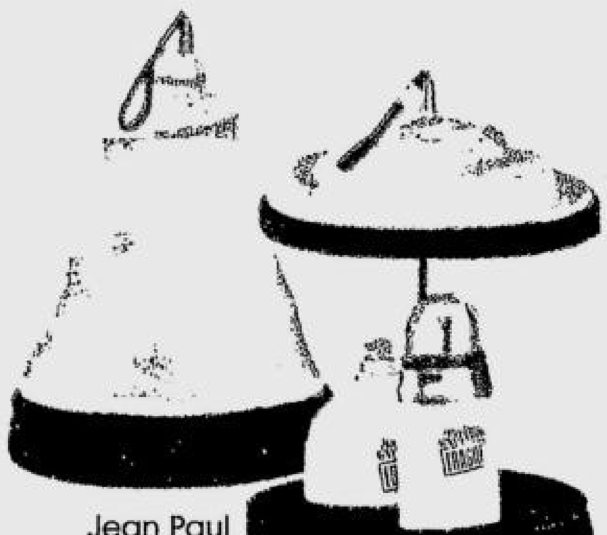
Christmas 2001

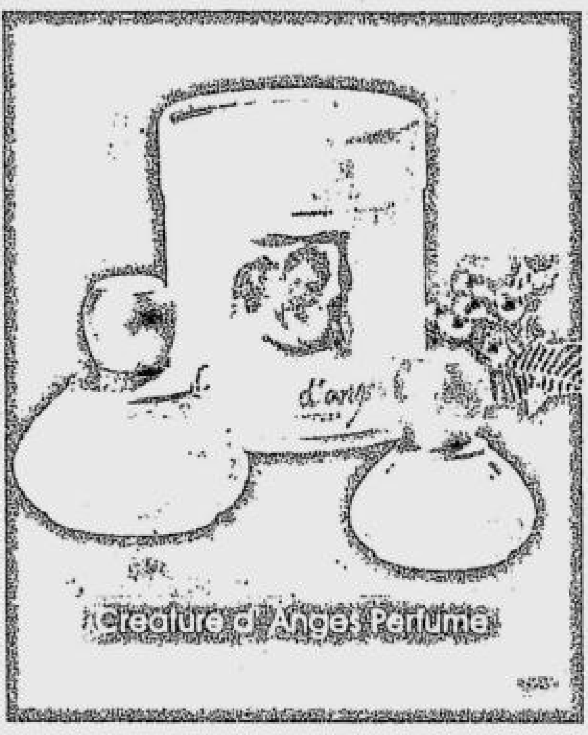
at h&b


Issey Miyake
Le Feu d'Issey

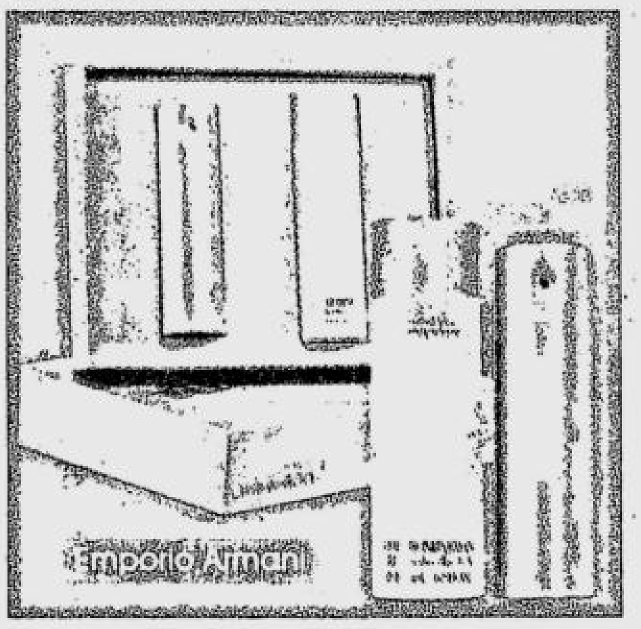

Giorgio Armani
Acqua di Gio


Versace Woman

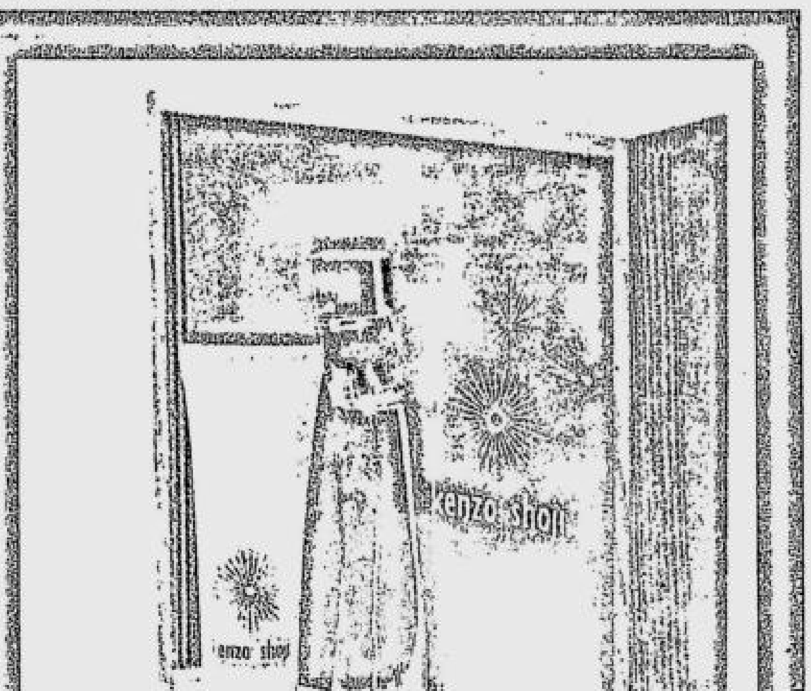

Jean Paul
Gaultier


Creature d'Anges Perfume

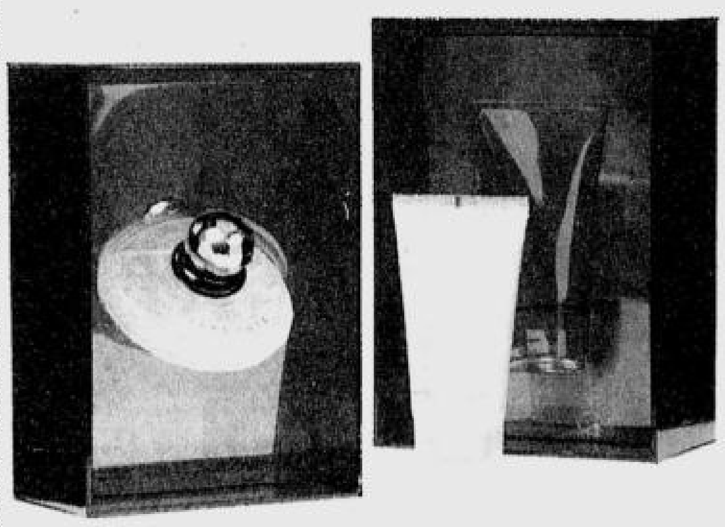
Davidoff Cool Connection Set
(with Cellphone Holder)


Emporio Armani

Irresistibly scented holiday gifting solutions for her


Flower
by Kenzo

Hugo Boss
Woman
Gift Set


Yves Saint Laurent Baby Doll

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